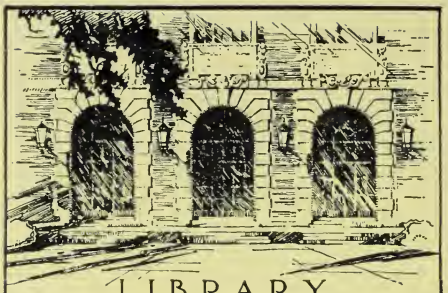
AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE

212

By Author of 'Sacristan's Household.'



LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS
823
T744a
1880

P(N THE

S.

LE.

Tilbu arborough
Uncl
The
Ceris
Brool ise
"Bon
"M. (e
Contı Comely

R.

Jack f Arran
Harr a Cloud
The (Fossbrooke

The Fortunes of Glencore
One of Them
Sir Jasper Carew
A Day's Ride
Maurice Tiernay
Barrington

Bramleighs of Bishop's
Tony Butler [Folly
That Boy of Norcott's
Lord Kilgobbin
Cornelius O'Dowd
Nuts and Nutcrackers

BY CHARLES LEVER.

2s. 6d. Vols.

Charles O'Malley
The Daltons
Knight of Gwynne
Dodd Family Abroad

Tom Burke of "Ours"
Davenport Dunn
Roland Cashel
Martins of Cro' Martin

BY HENRY KINGSLEY.

Geoffry Hamlyn
Ravenshoe [Burtons
The Hillyars and the

Silcote of Silcotes
Leighton Court
Austin Elliot

SELECT LIBRARY OF FICTION.

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

Doctor Thorne
The Macdermots
Rachel Ray
The Kellys
Tales of all Countries
Castle Richmond
The Bertrams
Miss Mackenzie
The Belton Estate

An Editor's Tales
Ralph the Heir
La Vendée
Lady Anna
Vicar of Bullhampton
Sir Harry Hotspur
Is He Popenjoy?
Eye for an Eye
Cousin Henry

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

2s. 6d. Vols.

THE DUKE'S CHILDREN

Orley Farm
Can You Forgive Her?
Phineas Finn

He Knew He was Right
Eustace Diamonds
Phineas Redux

The Prime Minister

BY MRS. OLIPHANT.

May
For Love and Life
Last of the Mortimers
Squire Arden
Ombra
Madonna Mary

Harry Muir
Heart and Cross
Magdalen Hepburn
The House on the Moor
Lilliesleaf
Lucy Crofton

The Days of My Life

BY JAMES PAYN.

Married Beneath Him
Clyffards of Clyffe
Mirk Abbey
Found Dead
A Woman's Vengeance

At Her Mercy
Humorous Stories
Like Father, Like Son
Not Wooed, but Won
Cecil's Tryst

Gwendoline's Harvest

POPULAR AUTHORS IN THE

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.

BY WHYTE MELVILLE.

Tilbury Nogo
Uncle John
The White Rose
Cerise
Brookes of Bridlemere
"Bones and I"
"M. or N."
Contraband
Market Harborough
Sarchedon
Satanella
Katerfelto
Sister Louise
Rosine
Roy's Wife
Black but Comely
Riding Recollections.

BY CHARLES LEVER.

Jack Hinton
Harry Lorrequer
The O'Donoghue
The Fortunes of Glencore
One of Them
Sir Jasper Carew
A Day's Ride
Maurice Tiernay
Barrington
Luttrell of Arran
A Rent in a Cloud
Sir Brook Fossbrooke
Bramleighs of Bishop's
Tony Butler [Folly
That Boy of Norcott's
Lord Kilgobbin
Cornelius O'Dowd
Nuts and Nutcrackers

BY CHARLES LEVER.

2s. 6d. Vols.

Charles O'Malley
The Daltons
Knight of Gwynne
Dodd Family Abroad
Tom Burke of "Ours"
Davenport Dunn
Roland Cashel
Martins of Cro' Martin

BY HENRY KINGSLEY.

Geoffry Hamlyn
Ravenshoe [Burtons
The Hillyars and the
Silcote of Silcotes
Leighton Court
Austin Elliot

1] London: CHAPMAN & HALL (LIMITED), 193, Piccadilly.

SELECT LIBRARY OF FICTION.

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

Doctor Thorne
The Macdermots
Rachel Ray
The Kellys
Tales of all Countries
Castle Richmond
The Bertrams
Miss Mackenzie
The Belton Estate

An Editor's Tales
Ralph the Heir
La Vendée
Lady Anna
Vicar of Bullhampton
Sir Harry Hotspur
Is He Popenjoy?
Eye for an Eye
Cousin Henry

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

2s. 6d. Vols.

THE DUKE'S CHILDREN

Orley Farm
Can You Forgive Her?
Phineas Finn

He Knew He was Right
Eustace Diamonds
Phineas Redux

The Prime Minister

BY MRS. OLIPHANT.

May
For Love and Life
Last of the Mortimers
Squire Arden
Ombra
Madonna Mary

Harry Muir
Heart and Cross
Magdalen Hepburn
The House on the Moor
Lilliesleaf
Lucy Crofton

The Days of My Life

BY JAMES PAYN.

Married Beneath Him
Clyffards of Clyffe
Mirk Abbey
Found Dead
A Woman's Vengeance

At Her Mercy
Humorous Stories
Like Father, Like Son
Not Wooed, but Won
Cecil's Tryst

Gwendoline's Harvest

SELECT LIBRARY OF FICTION.

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.

AUTHOR OF "WOMAN'S DEVOTION."

Mr. and Mrs. Asheton
Woman's Devotion
Ladies of Lovel Leigh
Queen of the County
Three Wives
Book of Heroines
Lords and Ladies

AUTHOR OF "URSULA'S LOVE STORY"

Beautiful Edith
Sun and Shade
Ursula's Love Story

AUTHOR OF "CASTE."

Colonel Dacre
My Son's Wife
Bruna's Revenge
Pearl
Entanglements
Caste
Mr. Arle

BY MISS AMELIA B. EDWARDS.

Miss Carew
Debenham's Vow
In the Days of My Youth
Monsieur Maurice

BY MRS. CRAIK,
AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX."

Agatha's Husband
Head of the Family
The Ogilvies
Olive
Two Marriages

BY MRS. TROLLOPE.

Adventures of a Clever Woman
Young Heiress
Gertrude; or Family Pride

Berryman

AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE.

BY

FRANCES ELEANOR TROLLOPE,

AUTHOR OF
"THE SACRISTAN'S HOUSEHOLD,"
"MABEL'S PROGRESS,"
ETC. ETC.

NEW EDITION.

LONDON:
CHAPMAN AND HALL (LIMITED),
193 PICCADILLY.
1880.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017 with funding from
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Alternates

https://archive.org/details/auntmargaretstro00trol

823
T747a
1880

THIS

LITTLE STORY

IS

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

TO

E. L. T.

1150473

AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE.

CHAPTER I.

I SUPPOSE that, to be successful, one should see only one side of the object to be attained. At all events, I believe this to have been my sister Anna's case; and she succeeded, if to gain what one strives for, be success. Now that I have written those words, they scarcely seem to convey my meaning. Perhaps I should have expressed it better, if I had written—but no; let it stand as it is.

The reverse of the medal has been my

stumbling-block through life. I have always allowed my imagination to busy itself too much with what might be said against, as well as for, any plan, purpose, or speech, of mine. But at this quiet twilight-time of my life, and in these pages which will not be read until the twilight shall have deepened into night, and the night—as I reverently hope—shall have brightened into the dawn of a heavenly day, I resolve to keep but one object in view, and to endeavour to attain it in all simplicity and single-mindedness. And this is my object, Lucy. I want you to know the true story of those who have gone before you, and who have nurtured your youth. The story of two women, who were once young, as you are now young; who lived, and loved, and suffered, as you must

one day live, and love, and suffer. I have little hope that our warning beacon will avail to keep you from the rocks. The records of our common humanity date back ages and ages beyond the days of my youth, Lucy—though I dare say your twelve-year-old imagination can hardly conceive a time when Aunt Margaret was young!—and yet I never heard of a case in which one human being's heart-experience served to teach any but himself or herself. We are truly the "heirs of all the ages" in one sense. Science bequeathes its treasures of research and labour. Intellect stumbles, and wavers, and sometimes falls, but progresses, still progresses. The pioneers of thought do good service; and noble band after band, succeeding each other, have hewn out paths for us,

on which we travel contentedly, with scant gratitude to, or thought of, the hewers. But, in the science of Life, we must all begin for ourselves where our great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers began. Just as to-morrow will bring with it the same sequence of morning, noon, and night, that dawned, and flamed, and faded, in Eden. Still, it will be well that you should one day know the truth of a family story which you are as yet too young thoroughly to understand. It will be well if it make you think gently and pitifully of the dead; if it help you to see that "nought's had, all's spent, if our desire be got without content;" and, above all, if it convince you that unless your desire be a worthy one, its attainment can assuredly never, never, bring content.

Your grandmother was my sister Anna; that sister of whom I have said that she succeeded in gaining what she strove for. You never saw her after you were an infant two years old, and I know not how I can make you picture to yourself my sister—the sister of pale, wrinkled, grey-haired Aunt Margaret—as a bright, handsome, brilliant girl, full of life, and with a wonderfully high and haughty spirit. She had dark brown eyes of my colour, but larger and brighter—eyes that flashed and sparkled, and sometimes shone with too fierce a lustre when she was excited or angry. She was somewhat shorter than I, but bore herself so erectly as to seem the taller of the two. There was a family likeness between us; but I was never a beauty, while Anna always was. We were

brought up together by a guardian; for our parents died when I was five, and Anna three years old. Our father and mother were taken away by the same infectious fever within a fortnight of each other. I have been told—my remembrance of that time is too vague for me to speak of my own knowledge—that our mother died first, in delirium, all unconscious of the fond and faithful hand which clasped her to the last; and that from that moment our father, who had kept up to tend and nurse her, drooped and sickened, and seemed to yield himself to death. What hurt him most, was, that she should not have recognised him at the end, nor said one word of farewell; and I think the very last words he spoke were, "Phœbe will know me when I see her, now!"

They used to say I was like him. Well! Our guardian came, and took us away from the desolate house, and we soon forgot our brief sorrow, and found a warm, soft nest to dwell in, two little unfledged innocents that we were, from whom the sheltering mother-wings had taken flight so soon, for ever.

I have used the term "our guardian," for so he was truly and faithfully; but I do not mean that he was ever legally appointed so; nor, indeed, were we of importance enough to have a guardian appointed for us. We had no treasure, and needed no dragon to guard it; but God sent us a friend who, though there was nothing else to take care of, took care of *us* from pure love and compassion. He was the husband of my mother's half-sister, a woman many years older than my

mother, and he had known and loved both my parents. Childless themselves, he and his wife had often begged—half in jest, half in earnest—to have one of us little ones, to rear as their own. Anna was their favourite—as she was most people's—such a pretty plump thing as she was, with great eyes, and delicate rings of dark brown hair curling over her forehead! But they would have been glad to take either of us. They have often told me that father used to say laughingly, "Wait till I die, Jim, and I'll leave you one of them in my will."

Poor father! Mother was passionately eager to have a son, and had even, I believe, made a half-promise that, if ever a boy were born to her, one of us inferior creatures should be transferred to the Gable House.

But I do not think that any number of brothers would have pushed us from our places in father's heart. It was hoped at first that there might be some small provision for us, when his affairs were finally wound up. No one expected that we could have much; but his practice had been a large one, and he had lived simply, and had had no selfish expenses. However, beyond the small sum obtained by the sale of the furniture and books, we had literally nothing. A country surgeon, if he be one of those good Samaritans to whom the sight of helpless suffering is the most effectual appeal that can be made, and who will not only prescribe the healing oil and cordial wine, but bestow them, if need be, is seldom rich. And my father was still young and

strong when the fever felled him. He looked not for death. How many of us do expect his coming, even though the journey have been long, and the road stretch far behind us? Uncle Gough carried us home, Anna and me, in our little black frocks; and Aunt Gough kissed us, and cried over us, and took us into her heart, and filled a mother's place to us, while she lived.

I remember that, from the first, Anna was the more masterful of us two. What she desired, she desired so eagerly; what she aimed at, even in our childish days, she pursued with so blind a vehemence of passion; that weaker wills unconsciously drew aside, and ceased from offering any obstacle to her course. It was bad for Anna, this yielding on the part of those around

her. I have sometimes thought, that if our parents had lived, Anna and others might have been spared the bitter sorrows which afterwards wrecked more than one life. And yet the expression of that thought seems so like a reproach to the memory of the beloved guardians of our youth, that I cannot bear to say so. But the fault, if fault there were, lay in the excessive tenderness of aunt and uncle Gough. They had so resolved that the orphans should never miss the sweetness of a mother's love, should never feel, even for an instant, the chill of orphanhood and strangeness in their new home, that they shrank from the remotest semblance of harshness, and wielded their authority with a gentleness which seemed almost feeble.

CHAPTER II.

THE new home that received us was delightful in its outward aspect. It was a very old building, and the good fortune or good taste of its successive occupants had preserved it almost in its original condition. I have never, in England, seen so perfect and picturesque a specimen of an ancient dwelling-house, except in the good old town of Shrewsbury. Uncle Gough's residence was, however, situated in a quite different quarter of England, in a smiling southern county, and within twenty miles of the sea. It was, I believe, the largest and was most certainly

the noblest-looking house in the little town of Willborough, and it stood in spacious grounds of its own. The lawn and gardens and orchards extended back a considerable distance; but the front of the house was quite near enough to the main street of the town for its numerous gables to be well seen from thence above the high brick walls which surrounded it; and the great old iron entrance-gate gave to view the hall door, with its quaint overhanging porch and the stone benches within it on either side, whereon, in fine sunny weather, might often be seen a heap of children's books and toys, with, perhaps, a small straw hat or a crumpled sash, the whole zealously guarded by the tiniest, fieriest, uncanniest-looking black-and-tan terrier that was ever beheld. For this great

porch was Anna's favourite playing-place, and Vixen was her favourite playmate. The porch was a constant casus belli,—not be tween Anna and aunt Gough, for the dear soul would let the child have her way when she fancied her heart was set upon littering the stone benches and pursuing her pastimes in full view of all the passers-by in the High-street. But old Stock, uncle's factotum and absolute tyrant, strongly objected to what he called the unseemliness of poor Anna's selected haunt. He was a queer wooden-looking old man, whose real business was that of a gardener, but who seemed to fancy he had a sort of vested right in every inch of uncle Gough's territory which lay outside the thick panels of the hall door. Beyond that, into the house itself, he never

pushed his authority; but once set your foot on the broad slab of stone under the entrance-porch, and you entered the domains of King Stock, or, as we children used to call him when we came to the days of Æsop's Fables, King Stork. Certainly that long-legged monarch himself could not have been more absolute, or more superbly indifferent to the inclinations of his subjects. Stock's highest word of praise was "seemly." I have heard him call the great snowy sea of apple blossoms in the orchard, flushed by a red sunset, "a seemly sight." In the same way, if Stock pronounced any person, place, or thing to be "unseemly," we all knew that he meant to convey a very strong expression of condemnation. I have sometimes thought he fancied the word to be scriptural, and to

carry with it a weight of solemnity beyond any mere mundane or usual phrase. However that may have been, I know that he and Anna had many and many a battle about that unfortunate porch. "Why, Miss Anna," he would say, with slow utterance and wooden immovable face, "when you've got the larn"—so he called the lawn—"and the gardens, and the srubbery, and the horchard, and the medders, for to play in, take what you likes and spile what you likes, whativer possesses you to come and litter and mess all over this here porch, with your pictur-books and your ties (toys)? And that little scratting beast of a Vixen, that I'd rayther 'ave 'ad a dozen barn-door fowl on the gravel-drive this mornin', and the marks of her paws all over them stone benches! 'Tisn't

seemly, I tell ye. Do what you likes in the house. There's more old rooms and passages in the top story nor you'd trot through on your small petitoes in a week. But in this porch you shall not be; for 'tis a unseemly thing, and there's an end."

But there was by no means an end. Anna would stamp her small scarlet-shod foot (children wore red morocco shoes in those days), and would knit her delicate baby eyebrows, and would throw herself furiously on the bench beside her treasures at the least hint of an attempt to remove them; while Vixen would bark and snap, and dart forward with short spiteful leaps of defiance, and the two would be so shrill and shrewish that the fray generally ended in the child and the dog being left panting, but victorious, in

possession of the field. Once only, old Stock —who never turned a hair, as the phrase goes, in these combats, but was outwardly as cool and unruffled as his small foe was flushed and dishevelled—adopted the extreme measure of lifting up the refractory one, screaming with rage, in his arms, and carrying her deliberately to my uncle in the library for instant punishment; while Vic, small of body, but great of spirit, hung on by her teeth to the calf of his leathern gaiter with all four legs off the ground at once. Ludicrous as the scene was, our kind guardians were so frightened by Anna's violence, and so unwilling to deny her the gratification of any wish, that Stock's appeal resulted in total defeat for him, and triumph and consolation for his enemy, in the shape of an orange and a

bright silver sixpence. Dear, dear uncle Gough! How tender he was, how pitiful, how patient, with the helpless motherless children he had taken to be as his own.

From that day forth, Stock never sought to interfere with Anna's choice of a playing-place. I believe she was the only creature who, within the memory of men, had successfully fought Stock on his own territory; and it might have been expected that he would be implacable against his pigmy conqueror. But it was not so. I believe he was afterwards doubly stern in asserting his authority against all the rest of the world, and I have an indistinct remembrance of uncle Gough's having been obliged to yield up certain celery-beds which Stock chose to

disapprove of, as a peace-offering to his outraged dignity. But I do not think Stock was more harsh with Anna after her victory than before. Indeed, I used to fancy that he almost liked her the better for it. On one occasion, I ventured to tread some little way in my sister's footsteps, emboldened by the success of her rebellion; but my audacity received so prompt and severe a check as effectually quenched any rising aspiration I might have had to do battle with "King Stork," presumptuous little minnow that I was! It happened in this wise. We had been racing and romping through the grounds all the morning of one bright summer day, and towards noon were thoroughly heated and weary. Nurse had carried off Anna, half cross and whole sleepy, for a nap before our

early dinner. I, being two years older, and not so delicate and easily tired as my sister, was left to follow my own devices until it should be time to wash and brush me for dinner. Under those circumstances, and while still undecided how to bestow myself during the next hour, my eye caught the broad island of shadow cast by the porch on the dazzling space of yellow gravel that lay glaring in the sunshine before the house. A graceful Virginia creeper hung lightly over the entrance, and the porch looked so deep and mysterious in its blackness of shade, that I thought of a certain cave in a wood that I had been told of in some fairy tale of surpassing interest, and the idea occurred to me how delightful it would be to play at being the enchanted maiden who was kept

prisoner by the wicked fairy, compelled to remain spell-bound and motionless in the cave until the handsomest prince in all the world should come and touch her with a branch of the magic linden-tree, when she was to arise and marry the prince, and live happy ever after! There was a great golden-blossomed laburnum on one side of the porch, and that would do very well for the linden-tree, and would be much prettier. So off I ran in hot haste to the "wilderness" —as our play-room was significantly christened—and returned flushed and happy to the porch, with my doll and a white woolly lamb on wheels, whereof the uninitiated could never, at first sight, distinguish the head from the tail, much to my chagrin. Dolly was not so beautiful a work of art as

your waxen baby, Lucy. She was large and clumsy, cut out of wood, with crimson-varnished cheeks, and her hair conspicuously attached to her skull by a bright tin tack in the middle of the parting; but she was very dear to my childish heart for all that, and, for a power of Protean versatility, and assumption of the most widely differing characters, I would match her against the choicest and costliest puppets of France or Germany. Well! I came back to the porch, carrying Dolly and Snowball. Snowball, the woolly lamb, was an innovation, there being no such character in the original story; but I constructed in my mind an episode showing how Snowball, in endeavouring to defend his beloved mistress, had incurred the wicked fairy's wrath, and had been con-

demned to share her captivity: so his presence in the cave was satisfactorily accounted for. I covered Dolly's head and shoulders with a pink silk scarf from my own neck, and immediately she became as magnificent and malignant a fairy as could be desired. Then I lay down on the cool stone bench, with my arms round Snowball's neck, and waited for Prince Goldenheart with his branch of linden.

The shade and the silence, and my morning's romp, combined to make me drowsy. I was just beginning to lose the sensation of Snowball's rough wool against my cheek, when a slow heavy step on the gravel outside startled me into wakefulness, and I sat up very quietly and peered out under the hanging screen of Virginia creeper. Of

course it was old Stock. I had known his step at once. He was going towards the garden, and carried a heavy spade over his shoulder. The porch was so dark, and the outer sunlight so dazzling, that I think he would have passed by without seeing me, had it not been for poor Dolly, who, true to her present character of the malignant fairy, was the means of getting me into trouble. I had stuck her up to keep guard over us at the entrance of the cave, and the glories of her pink scarf attracted Stock's attention. "Hulloa!" said he, looking in upon me, with his gnarled brown hand shading his eyes; "why, it's you, is it, Miss Margrit?" He spoke very sternly, and stooped as if to take up Dolly. "O, would you *please* not to touch her, Stock," said I,

pleading eagerly; "she is the fairy Malevola, and I am Rosabella, and nobody can come into the cave without a branch of the magic linden-tree, and——" "Oho!" growled Stock, interrupting my explanation, and ruthlessly lifting the fairy Malevola by one leg, so that she dangled helplessly upside down, with her dishevelled locks revealing her bald wooden block of a head, except just where the tin tack held them on; "Oho! YOU are agoin' to set me at defiance now, are you, Miss Margrit? If nobody can't go into the cave, somebody shall come out on it! Ain't you shamed to be flyin' in the faces of them as Providence has been pleased to call into that condition of life? Come along out this minute, you bad-behaved child." It so irritated me to see

him slowly swinging Dolly backwards and forwards as he spoke, with her poor bald head ignominiously exposed to view, and her black curls sweeping the gravel, that I was goaded into resistance. "Give me my doll!" I cried, half astonished at my own audacity. She was no longer the fairy Malevola; there was no enchanted cave, no magic linden, no Prince Goldenheart. Ah, no. All that had vanished like a broken bubble Stock had spoiled it all. But I clasped Snowball tightly under one arm, and held out the other for Dolly with an imperious gesture. "I WILL have her!" "Who says shall and will?" retorted Stock, with exasperating disregard of my demand. "YOU says shall and will, now; do you? Them ain't words for little child'en." "Dolly is

mine, not yours," said I, struggling to keep down my tears, and clutching Snowball; "she is mine, my very own, and you have no right to keep her from me." "No right!" repeated Stock, aghast at the demonstration—"no right!" If I was to come down so fur as to reason with a babe and suckling, I'd ask you what right you have to be a playin', and—and a strayin'—in a place where you've been forbid for to play." Here he made a full stop; but added, after an instant, and with his usual deliberation, "—or for to stray." The logic of this retort struck me more forcibly than any mere scolding could have done. It was true I had been forbidden to bring my toys into the porch; but, next minute, there came into my mind the remembrance of Anna's victory,

and I felt Stock's argument to be unsound. "Anna," said I, eagerly, "Anna was let to come here yesterday, and she cut the gravel with her skipping-rope; and if she has a right to be here, so have I." Stock turned his deep-set black eyes full upon me, and looked at me piercingly for a second or two. "Miss Margrit," said he at last, "don't YOU arguey. Argueyment ain't meant for women folks, much more babes and sucklings. No good didn't never come on it. What they've got to do, is, just to mind what's said to them, and do it. That's the law and the prophets. You come out of that porch this minute, or I'll spile this here wooden image for good an' all." He lifted his heavy spade, and made as though he would have cut Dolly in two with it. I do not believe now

that he would really have done so, for, though a harsh and crabbed old man, he was not brutal. But my childish heart leaped with terror when I saw the murderous weapon suspended over the smiling and unconscious Dolly; and, with a scream, I darted forth, caught the doll in my arms, and rushed away across the lawn at the back of the house, never stopping until I had plunged into the thickest part of the shrubbery, where I flung myself sobbing on the grass, and hugged my rescued treasure.

More than sixty years have passed since that day when I so unsuccessfully emulated Anna—for I cannot have been much over seven years old—and yet every incident of it is far more vividly present to my mind than

when I was five-and-twenty. I can recall the bitter pungent taste of a spiky leaf from the old cedar-tree under which I lay, and the half-unconscious way in which I put it between my teeth, and pricked my lips with its sharp point. Ah, Lucy! Since that day I have dreamed day-dreams in other enchanted caves, and have been bound by stronger spells than the fairy Malevola's, and I have waited for Prince Goldenheart, as you will wait for him some day; and instead of the handsomest youth in all the world, with a fragrant green bough in his hand, there has hobbled up old Stock with his spade, to crumble the whole beautiful vision into dust! But then too, Lucy, I have never had the warmth of love and pity, and sympathy with suffering, quenched out of my

heart, and, after all, I ought to be a happy old woman. And so I am, my dear. So I am.

We were happy in those days, if ever children were happy. As time went on, and we ceased to be mere babies, we were not allowed to run wild about the grounds from morning to night. But such tasks as were set us had no terrors, and few difficulties. I fear that you of the rising generation will have but a mean opinion of Aunt Gough's educational powers, when I confess that I was turned eight years old before I could read with ease. But I had already worked several samplers, and could even stitch a shirt very creditably by that time. Anna's education began somewhat earlier, as was natural; for the two years' difference be-

tween our ages enabled me to help her at first, in deciphering the mysteries of Great A and little b. Aunt Gough was a stanch church-woman. Every Sunday morning we were taken to the great family pew, and were perched up side by side on two crimson hassocks, placed on the seat; and thus elevated, the brim of my hat just reached to the top of the pew. Anna, being smaller, was altogether invisible to the outside world, except when she stood up on her cushion during the psalms. There are scarcely any pews now-a-days. Everybody sits on a hard bench in full view of his or her neighbour. As it is certainly a much more uncomfortable state of things than the old fashion, let us hope it has some compensating spiritual advantages.

Anna and I liked going to church. It was not made terrible to our young imaginations, nor were we taught to think of religion as of a stern Medusa, whose contemplation turns the gazer into stone. As to giving us any portion of the Scriptures to learn by way of punishment, aunt Gough would have been shocked at the notion of such a thing. She did, indeed, consider it her duty to make us learn the Church Catechism,—which we didn't understand; and she told us stories from the New Testament—which we did understand, and, moreover, delighted in. One great source of Sunday pleasure was the music. Our church possessed a very fine old organ; and though our organist would not be considered very scientific in these days, he contrived to elicit from it its

mellowest tones and richest harmonies. He loved the grand old instrument, and thought more of his organ than of himself: which feeling—the self-forgetfulness of a true artist — communicated itself irresistibly to its hearers. Even we children were conscious of a beauty in the psalms and voluntaries, beyond the mere sound. And I remember once saying to our guardian, "I do like to listen to Mr. Dixon, he plays so kindly."

As we grew older, and were thought to have got beyond the range of dear aunt Gough's simple teaching, we were sent to a day-school in the town. Our schoolmistress, Miss Wokenham, was one of the tiniest women I ever saw. There was more than one child of eleven or twelve years old, in

the school, who could look down on her from a superior height; and our plump rosy cheeks, and round arms, would seem quite coarse and clumsy—*rustic* as the phrase was then, for everything redolent of health and vigour, as well as for what was in itself rough and unpolished—beside Miss Wokenham's fragile elfish form. She was not old, as I now reckon age—perhaps forty-five—but her antiquity was very venerable in my eyes then. Her hair was snowy white, but soft and shining, and wavy with natural curls; she had bright dark eyes, and an immensely wide mouth, filled, however, with a faultless set of teeth. Perhaps Miss Wokenham's attainments were really nothing very marvellous, but we all thought her a prodigy of learning. And, indeed, making all due

allowance for the march of intellect in these days, I am inclined to believe that Miss Wokenham was mistress of some solid acquirements that one might seek for, vainly, among more showily accomplished governesses. She had a competent knowledge of history and geography, and a turn for arithmetic that was quite surprising; she had even, it was whispered, dabbled a little in the mathematics; and our parish clergyman, who had graduated at Cambridge, was wont to declare, that if Miss Wokenham had been a man, she would have made the wranglers of her year look to their laurels. But perhaps this was a figure of speech. At all events, Miss Wokenham herself used to declare it was; and she was a most absolutely and uncompromisingly truthful human being.

If, as sometimes happened, a scholar thirsting for knowledge pushed her beyond her depth, she never hesitated for an instant to confess her ignorance. "I don't know, my dear," she would say, fixing her brave black eyes earnestly on the interrogator: "I don't know, but if it is to be known, we'll find it out." And then she would reach down the lexicon, or the atlas, or whatever book of reference might be needed, and work side by side with her pupil, until the desired information was gained. This candour, far from weakening her influence over us, had so diametrically opposite an effect, that we were one and all ready to swear to the positive certainty of anything imparted to us by Miss Wokenham as a fact.

Under her tuition I and Anna were well

content to remain, until we were respectively seventeen and fifteen years old, with no more brilliant accomplishments than as much music as enabled us to rattle through a country dance or so, and a smattering of French imparted by a long-suffering Frenchman named De Beauguet, whom we persisted in irreverently styling Old Bogie. Anna had a lovely fresh voice, and used to thrill all our hearts with some old Border ballad, or a canzonet by Mr. Haydn, as we sat round the fire in the winter twilight. I sang too, a little, but my voice had neither the power nor the charm of Anna's.

Meanwhile, things went on pleasantly and peacefully at the Gable House. If time began to streak uncle Gough's hair with

snow, and to deepen a line here and there in my aunt's comely face, the change was so gradual that we did not notice it. Perhaps old Stock altered as little as it was possible or any one to do, during a lapse of ten years. He had always seemed old since we had known him, so that was nothing new. He had always been brown-skinned, and stooping, and wrinkled, and crabbed, and he was so still ; so *that* was nothing new. Poor old Stock ! He seemed to have but one pleasure in life, unless his constant quarrels with every one around him afforded him gratification. His sole luxury was his pipe. He would sit by the kitchen fire of an evening, smoking his church-warden filled with the strongest tobacco that could be bought, and talking theology to the maids ; for Stock had

decided views about religion. I used to think, when I was a child, that they were quite peculiar to himself; but I have heard in subsequent years dogmas gravely promulgated, which, barring the difference of grammar, might have emanated from old Stock himself.

Cook was the only one of the servants bold enough to tackle Stock on this, his strong point; but even she frequently retired worsted from the conflict. "Well," she would say, taking refuge in generalities: "I'm sure I don't know, Mr. Stock, but I've allays believed as them as acted accordin' to their consciences was in the right way. There's more nor one road to heaven, you know."

"Heaven!" Stock would repeat, with a

growl of contempt. "Much *you* knows about heaven!"

"Deary me, bless us and save us, Mr. Stock! I hopes I knows as much about heaven as you do, any way."

"I'm one of the 'lect, *I* am," the old man would say: his face wooden as ever, and his utterance deliberate and weighty as with a sense of absolute conviction: "*I*'m all right. There'll be me and one or two more on us there, but there'll be vary few on us—*vary* few on us."

I remember the curious speculations this kind of talk used to excite in my mind. I never for a moment believed that Stock was right, but I used to wonder with the vague curiosity of a thoughtful child how he would feel when he found so many more people in

heaven than he expected, and whether he would be pleased or disappointed at not finding it reserved for the exclusive occupation of himself and "one or two more on us."

CHAPTER III.

AUNT and uncle Gough were neither rich nor grand people, though the Gable House was, as I have said, the noblest-looking dwelling in Willborough. The house was not my uncle's own property, but he held a long lease of it. It belonged to some great county magistrate: a baronet whose very name I have forgotten, though he was a mighty person in Willborough, and held property for miles around it. But socially speaking, he was as far removed from our household as if he had lived in Kamschatka. His steward, Mr. Lee, we knew slightly, and

saluted when we met him in the street on market-days; but he was so solemn and grand a person that he always chilled me into awe-struck silence, though he often condescended to smile and speak to us girls as we grew up. Once he told uncle that Miss Anna had a monstrous sprightly air and a fine shape, and would turn all the young fellows' heads, by-and-by. "And did he say nothing of our sweet Madge?" asked my aunt, when the flattering words had been reported at home, and had been blushed and smiled at. Aunt Gough, dear tender-hearted soul, feared that I might feel slighted; but in truth, it had never occurred to me as possible that the pompous Mr. Lee should have noticed or remembered me at all. "Well, well, well," said my uncle, as he drew me to

him with so sweet and fond a smile that I felt my eyes fill with tears, "I'm not sure that I want Mr. Lee to make pretty speeches about Madge. He can tell which of them has the brightest eyes; of that he's a good enough judge, so don't think I want to rob you of your compliment, Anna. But if Madge won't turn heads, she'll creep into hearts; won't she, my dear?" He passed his hand softly over my hair as he spoke. I want to tell the truth, and I must confess that just for a moment I felt a sort of irritable impatience at being told I should not turn heads. Why should I not turn heads as well as another? I half withdrew myself from the touch of the fatherly hand that was caressing me. But the little unworthy feeling passed directly, and in an instant I had

kissed my uncle, and we were all laughing together at Anna's assurance that she would begin to practise the turning process on Mr. Lee himself, the very next time she saw him.

The opportunity was not long in coming, but I think Anna had forgotton her vow; at any rate, I don't believe she tried to fulfil it. It was a fortnight after uncle had told us of Mr. Lee's compliment—on the next market-day but one—that my sister and I, coming homeward up the High-street, saw before us my uncle's tall figure, walking side by side with the portly Mr. Lee. They were talking earnestly together, and going at a much slower pace than we were, so we soon overtook them. The foot-pavement of the Willborough High-street was very narrow: so

narrow that two persons walking abreast needed its whole width. We could not pass my uncle and Mr. Lee by stepping off the pavement, because on market-days the roadway was filled with country folk. Vendors of poultry, eggs, butter, fruit, and vegetables, stood all along the edge of the causeway. Great carts, piled with country produce, or laden with a ruddy-cheeked farmer's family, jolted ponderously along, the waggoner whip in hand steering his unwieldy horses amidst the crowd as well as he could; and the docile brutes seeming to understand his uncouth gees, and woos, and wuts, with almost human intelligence. Now and again, a prosperous yeoman would ride by, his well-fed cob chafing and fretting at the enforced slowness of the pace. Then there were stout servant-

girls with heavy baskets, travelling pedlars hoarse with vaunting their wares, a blind fiddler or doleful ballad-singer, farm-labourers slow and bewildered of aspect, busy shopkeepers, whooping schoolboys, barking dogs, cackling hens, and I don't know what else.

We came close behind my uncle and his companion, and had even walked some paces at their heels, before they were aware of our being near them. "Yes, Mr. Gough," said the steward, with pompous emphasis, "so it is arranged. He will have the advantage of my name, position, and connection, and I think on the whole we may expect a fair start—a fair start. If a young man is put in the way of making a fair start, I consider it to be his own fault if

he does not—if he does not, in fact, start fair."

"Quite so, quite so, Mr. Lee," returned our guardian, with a pleasant laugh. "And I make no doubt but the young gentleman will do you credit."

Here Anna, raising herself on tip-toe, stretched her arm over uncle's shoulder and thrust a bunch of sweet herbs we had been buying for home use, under his nose. He and Mr. Lee stopped and turned round; as they did so, a third gentleman who had been walking a little in advance of them, and whom we had not seen until now, stopped and turned round too, on hearing my uncle's exclamation. "What now!" cried uncle, his face lighting up into smiles, as it always did whenever he saw either of

us, "saucy Nanny! I might have known it was one of your pranks. Fie, Miss! Ain't you ashamed? Here's Mr. Lee blushing for you."

I don't think Mr. Lee was blushing, but I know Anna was, and laughing too, and looking very pretty. Mr. Lee shook hands with us both, with much condescension; and as we were blocking up the pathway, and were being hustled and pushed this way and that, uncle Gough bade us two walk on, and said: "Perhaps Mr. Lee and Mr. Horace will be good enough to come to the Gable House and see aunty, and give us the pleasure of drinking a toast to Mr. Horace's success and prosperity, in our homely fashion, after dinner." Then the third gentleman, who had been in advance of them, was pre-

sented to us by Mr. Lee, as "my son Horace, young ladies;" and my uncle's invitation having been accepted, we all proceeded homeward. The two elders resumed their talk immediately, and chatted together all the way. But we young people walked shyly side by side in silence, until we reached the old iron gateway of the Gable House.

That was the first time I ever saw Horace Lee.

CHAPTER IV.

IT is difficult for me now, to separate that first impression from my subsequent knowledge of Horace, but I am nearly sure that I liked him from the first, although he was shy and silent, and a little stiff perhaps. I remember, quite certainly, feeling pleased (though I should have been puzzled to say why), that the younger Mr. Lee was not very like his father. Just the colour of the bluish-grey eyes, and the crisp curliness of the hair, were alike in the two. But Horace had not his father's massive jaw and coarse mouth, and he had altogether a gentle wist-

ful kind of expression when his face was in repose, which I supposed he inherited from his dead mother.

Uncle Gough stepped forward, and led the way beneath the porch of famous memory, and into the hall; and we four, Anna and I and the two Mr. Lees, followed in a somewhat pell-mell fashion. But I noticed that when we came to the dining-room door, and my sister and I paused an instant, old Mr. Lee pushed on, in his pompous self-absorbed way, and entered before us; and that a slight look of annoyance came across the young man's face as he drew back with a formal little bow, to allow us to pass. Dear aunt Gough was the soul of hospitality, and I believe if uncle had brought home half Willborough to dinner, she would have

felt no more regret than might be occasioned by anxiety lest they should not all be comfortable and well provided for. She ooked a little surprised when Mr. Lee walked in, for he had never been on intimate terms at the Gable House; but she welcomed him and his son with the sweet simple kindliness that cannot be counterfeited. And then, during dinner, we heard how it was that Mr. Horace was in Willborough, and what uncle had meant by speaking of a toast to his success and prosperity.

"Mr. Lee's son is coming to settle among us here, old woman," said my uncle to my aunt. "He has been studying engineering and land-surveying away in Birmingham, with Mr. —— Mr. ——"

"Topps," said the elder Mr. Lee, seeing that uncle paused for the name. "Topps. A very eminent man, madam. Very eminent man. And expensive, very expensive. But eminence is ever expensive." The old gentleman looked round as though he had said something highly gratifying, and expected us to appear pleased. Horace kept his eyes on the table-cloth.

"Yes," resumed my uncle, "Mr. Horace has been studying with Mr. Topps. I am sure that Mr. Horace has profited by his opportunities; and his course of study being now finished, I am glad to say he is coming to give us Willborough folk the advantage of his skill."

"I have bought him a share in the old-established business of Phillips and Rother-

wood," put in Mr. Lee. "Mr. Phillips is about retiring, and there is an opening for a young man with moderate capital and a good connection. I consider that I have done my duty by my son, in keeping before him from boyhood the advantage of a good connection. And, if I may be allowed to say so, I think he will find a good connection ready to receive him, and to respect him—for his father's sake."

"No doubt of that, sir," said uncle Gough, after so short a silence that there scarcely seemed to have been a pause at all; "and to like him for his own."

Horace looked up at my uncle then, and thanked him with a smile so bright that it seemed to light up his face as if a ray of sunshine had fallen on it.

After that, we girls went away with my aunt, and left the gentlemen over their wine. They did not remain apart very long, for the Lees had a ten-mile drive to their home, and the days were shortening already at the approach of autumn. They came into the morning room where we were sitting, to take leave of my aunt. Old Mr. Lee was a good deal flushed, and had been doing justice to my uncle's cellar. That was no uncommon circumstance in those days, but it was one we were unused to, for James Gough was the most temperate of men.

"Won't you stay and drink a dish of tea, sir?" asked my aunt hospitably, though she looked a little fluttered as Mr. Lee took her hand and glared at her solemnly. He was

not intoxicated, but he had taken enough to make him more prosy and pompous than usual.

"I thank you, madam, but 'tis a beverage I never partake of, and we are pressed for time. My horse and gig are awaiting us at the Blue Bell, but I could not depart without expressing my best thanks for your hospitality. Horace, why do you not join your acknowledgments to mine? I am surprised at your negligence."

"Oh, pray!" said poor aunt quite earnestly, "I'm sure there's no need, none in the world. It's a great pleasure to us to have entertained the young gentleman in our homely manner."

"But there is need, madam," persisted Mr. Lee. "There *is* need; pardon me for con-

tradicting you, but I am a great stickler for the observance of those polite forms which —which—gild the wheels of life. Likewise, I was brought up in the observance of the utmost courtesy, especially towards the gentler sex. You may deem me punctilious and over-precise, young man, but in my day it was thought no part of good manners to leave a lady's house without a parting compliment. Courtesy—courtesy and consideration for the fair sex, even in the most trifling matters, has been my rule through life."

I couldn't help thinking of the little scene at the dining-room door, and I had an uncomfortable idea that Mr. Horace was thinking of the same thing, and I felt my cheeks grow provokingly scarlet. Mr. Lee went on

some time longer, and made quite a speech, which, however, seemed to be spoken rather at us than to his son; but at last it came to an end, and he took a dignified leave of me, and an admiring one of Anna, paying her several high-flown compliments which she received very graciously and with much self-possession. Horace made each of us his stiff little bow. I fancy his father's paternal admonition had not tended to put him more at his ease. But no bashfulness could have helped thawing under the influence of aunt Gough's genial motherly manner, and the young man took her hand, and bade her farewell, quite cordially.

"I hope we shall see you at the Gable House very often," we heard uncle saying as he accompanied his guests down-

stairs. "You'll be a neighbour, you know, Mr. Horace. If you can put up with humdrum old-fashioned folks like us, you will always find a warm welcome and a cool tankard."

I have been sure since, that old Mr. Lee had accosted my uncle that market-day, and introduced his son to him, expressly that he might receive some such invitation, and secure a footing in the Gable household. I know not if he had any further plan in his mind at that time; but it was of itself no trifling advantage to a new comer in Willborough to be known as a welcome guest at the Gable House: an advantage which the baronet's steward was very sensible of, notwithstanding his boasts about his good connection. We had never been honoured by

so much of Mr. Lee's company before that day, and I think we were all tacitly agreed that it was a luxury we should not care to indulge in very often. But my uncle had taken a liking to the son, and said over and over again, "He's a nice lad. A well-looking lad, and well-mannered, though he's strange among us as yet. But where in the world he gets his shyness from, the Lord knows! His mother must have been a gentle creature. I never knew her; but he looks like a lad who has had a nice mother."

The autumn days grew shorter and shorter the faint smell of dead leaves was in the air, and the pale evening sky, pricked here and there with a spark of tremulous lustre, began to show the delicate tracery of leafless boughs relieved against its faint western

yellow. By that time, Horace Lee was as familiar an apparition beneath my uncle's roof as old Stock himself. His shyness wore off as he grew intimate with us, and we found him to be a most pleasant companion, with a vein of almost boyish fun and merriment which especially delighted my uncle. A closer bond of good fellowship between them revealed itself accidentally. James Gough was a north-countryman by birth and family. I cannot now explain—if, indeed, I ever did rightly know—what vicissitudes of fortune had brought him to dwell in our southern county; but I know he kept a warm corner in his heart for all that belonged to his dear Border land, and retained a clannish interest in his own far-away kinsfolk, even to cousins thrice removed. And

behold, one day it came out that Horace Lee's mother had been a Northumbrian, born and bred within twenty miles of my uncle's native place! Here was a pleasant discovery! Uncle Gough was never weary of questioning Horace about his dead mother, and rubbing up his own reminiscences of her family, the McNaghtens, until he ended by persuading himself that he must have known Mrs. Lee in early youth, though I am afraid it was inexorably proved by dates and figures that he could never have seen her. He would sit and talk for hours of the wild moorlands and the heathery solitudes he had tramped through when a boy, relating one adventure after another, until the northern burr would come back to his tongue, and the boyish sparkle into his

eyes, and he would bid Anna sing some old Border ballad, and would sit listening with closed eyelids to her fresh thrilling tones, while his heart lived over again the days of auld lang syne, and the tears stole unchecked down his dear honest face.

Horace, too, would listen, charmed and attentive. Anna, who loved excitement and admiration as much as most girls conscious of their beauty, and accustomed to receive praise in no stinted measure, never threw so much power and pathos into her voice, or so much expression into her changing face, as when Horace varied the monotony of her home audience and added novelty to the chorus of our familiar praises.

CHAPTER V.

MISS WOKENHAM was a frequent guest at this time at our fireside. She had made a confidence to us, and imparted a great piece of news, which we received half with pleasure and half with pain. The pleasure was occasioned by the hope that she would be happy and the pain by the thought of losing her. Miss Wokenham was going to be married! And her husband was to take her out of Willborough, out of England, out of Europe, away across the salt sea as far as North America. I well remember the day when she first broke the news to us, and the

comical struggle between crying and laughing which twitched her face all the time she was telling it. It was the afternoon of a half-holiday, one bright October day, when she walked into the parlour where Anna and I were sitting with aunt Gough, who was half-asleep over a perfect Arachne's web of fine-drawing. "Well, my mild-eyed Philosophy," said Miss Wokenham, greeting me with a kiss, which I had to stoop down to receive. (Almost every one of her pupils she distinguished by a nickname. Mine was Philosophy. Anna she always called Will-o'-the-wisp.) "Well, my mild-eyed Philosophy! And how are you? And how is dear aunty? I need not ask how *you* are, Will-o'-the-wisp, flashing and beaming brightly enough to lead a whole legion of unwary travellers

astray, and mischievous enough to enjoy their flounderings in the bog afterwards."

She had always a quick lively manner; but she now spoke more rapidly than usual, and I, who knew her well, was certain she was fluttered and excited. She proved me to be right after a minute or two, when, seating herself on a broad low cushion just by aunt Gough's knee, she clasped her hands tightly together and said, abruptly, "I'm not used to tell lies, and I find I can't even act one well. It's of no use my coming in with a swagger and pretending to be quite at my ease; for I'm not at my ease, and you know I'm not at my ease, and I know that you know I'm not at my ease. I've come on purpose to tell you something, Mrs. Gough, and, as the dear girls are here, they may as

well stay and hear it too, for they must know it sooner or later." She stopped an instant; but, seeing my aunt was about to speak, held up her hand to beg for silence, and went on with a plunge. "I am going to be married, and I know everything that can be said about the absurdity of such a step at my time of life. But I've balanced the disadvantages of living and dying a solitary lonely woman, without a human being to comfort me in sickness or sorrow, against the disadvantages of being laughed at for an old fool who threw away herself and her savings on the first frog-eating Frenchman who chose to hold up his finger to her, and I've come to the conclusion that I can endure ridicule in good company, better than dreary old age by myself. So there's my great news, my dears,

and you needn't put any restraint on the expression of your feelings."

I never heard any one observe that aunt Gough was remarkable for tact; but she certainly had a way of doing and saying the right thing at the right moment, which fell like soothing balm on the feelings of those around her. She was what it is now the fashion to call "sympathetic," in a greater degree than any one I have ever known. When little Miss Wokenham had finished her speech, and sat panting with her mouth twisted into a strained smile, and her bright black eyes brimming with tears, my aunt took her small hand gently in her own, and, patting it soothingly, said in her soft slow way, and without a trace of surprise in her voice: "And very good news it is too, and a

very sensible woman I think you for bringing it. And who is to be the good man, my love?"

The little woman jumped up and put her arms round my aunt's neck, giving way now to a gush of tears.

"That's the phrase," she said. "The very phrase, you dear, kind soul! I have been puzzling how I should call him—not in my own thoughts, you know, but to other people; and I felt that my lover, or my betrothed, was out of the question. Even husband gave me a kind of shock. It's so late to begin, you know. But 'good man,' that is the very phrase! Cosy and prosy, and yet kindly. And you don't think me a weak old idiot, do you?"

By-and-by the little woman calmed down

and received our congratulations with her usual sensible self-possession. Then, by degrees, she told us the story of her wooing.

"It's M'sieu' De Beauguet, the French master—Old Bogie, you know, girls. I shall be Mrs. Old Bogie. Won't that be a good name for me? I'm sure I never thought of such a thing all the years I've known him, though we were always on the best of terms, until, about a month ago, he came to me and told me that he had had an unexpected piece of good fortune. 'I'm honestly glad of it, M'sieu',' said I; 'for I have a great respect for you, and I'm sure you deserve a smile from Fortune, after bearing her frowns with such gallantry. But all the world knows how natural cheerful bravery is to a Frenchman.' My dears, I knew he had been very,

very poor, and had fought a hard fight without asking aid from any one. So it was not a mere flourish on my part. He made me a grand bow, and said, 'I accept the compliment for my nation, mademoiselle, not for myself.' And then he told me that a distant relative, from whom he had had no expectations, had died in Canada, whither he had emigrated many years ago, and that this distant relative had left a small property and a farm near Quebec to his second cousin, Louis Auguste Philippe Emile de Beauguet.

wrote the names down afterwards, and that's how I remember them so glibly. And then he said that he had resolved to give up teaching and to go out and settle in Canada, where there was quite a colony of his country-people; and he was full of his plans

and hopes. He didn't say a word about—about me—then. After he was gone, I don't mind owning that I felt much depressed. I was glad of his good prospects, really glad; and yet the idea of his going away all that distance, set me thinking how all those to whom I was attached, had other and stronger ties in the world—how the girls I had loved and taught grew up and passed out of my ken, generation after generation, vanishing away to be bright and pretty and clever in their distant homes, without a thought of their poor schoolmistress growing old by herself in her solitude. And I could not help thinking how other women took root, as it were, in the world, and bore fruit, and flourished into a green old age; whilst I stood alone, like some bare rock that had no

beauty and little use, and must some day topple down and lie unregretted where it falls. I worked myself into such a dismal, desolate frame of mind—more shame for me!—that I sat huddled up by the fire, crying and sobbing like a fool, when my little servant Kate came bouncing into the room,—you remember, Philosophy, my love, that we never *could* teach her to knock at the door—and brought me a great square letter, sealed with a coat of arms as big as a cheese-plate. It was from De Beauguet, of course. I'm not going to repeat it to you, don't be afraid, though I do know it by heart" —here a faint pink flush came over Miss Wokenham's delicate pale face—"But I may say it was a good letter, a very good letter. He said he felt alone in the world. He had

been exiled from his country and all he held dear in it, for so many years, that France was more like a beautiful dream to him than a reality. He said a great deal more than he need have done about generous kindness and delicate sympathy on the part of your humble servant. I'm not going to pretend that I was not gratified; but he gave me more than my due, ten thousand times over. And then at last he said that if I would—there!—would cast in my lot with his, and go abroad with him, he would undertake that I should never repent my confidence. I took a week to consider about it, though I *think*—upon my word I am not sure—that my mind was made up from the first. And the end of it is that I've promised Lewis to take him for better, for worse, and to be a

faithful kind companion to him, as well as I know how, so long as I have life and strength, and longer!"

After that day Miss Wokenham was a great deal at the Gable House. She had many preparations to make, and not too much time to get ready in. They were to be married in Liverpool, and to sail from that port in a merchantman bound for Quebec. Monsieur de Beauguet had arranged all that. My aunt was a perfect mistress of the craft of needlework, and Anna and I were fairly creditable scholars of so accomplished a teacher. So we all three were able to be useful to our old friend, and were happy to be allowed to help in the preparation of her wardrobe. The year was drawing to a close by this time, and we

stitched our way through the very core of the winter. Anna was a better sempstress than I, and her rapid fingers did good service in the manufacture of caps and aprons, and such other sober decorations as Miss Wokenham thought becoming her years. I worked neatly, but slowly; and our shrewd little bride elect was wont to say, "You're both dear kind children, but, on a stitching emergency, give me Anna! Philosophy, with the very best intentions, stops at every cross-road to deliberate which turning she shall take. Will-o'-the-wisp keeps moving and does get over the ground, even though it be after a somewhat zig-zag fashion."

One cold bleak day we had all been busy in the morning-room from an early hour. When, in the sudden dusk, Miss Wokenham

folded up her work and prepared to go homeward, my aunt stopped her, and insisted that she should stay to take tea and see my uncle.

"Horace will be here too, by-and-by," said aunt Gough—"young Mr. Lee, that is; but he seems so much one of us now, that I give the lad his Christian name as natural as possible. And both of them will be so glad to see you."

"I should like to stay very much, but—but M'sieu' is to walk and meet me this evening, on the way home, and perhaps he'd be disappointed if I was not there."

"Perhaps he would?" echoed aunt Gough. "Why, of course he would. But I will send some one to him with my respects, to say that you are here, and that I expect him to

tea, if he will do us the pleasure of coming without ceremony."

Thus tempted, Miss Wokenham remained, and in due time "M'sieu'" arrived. We had seen him since the announcement of his engagement to our old schoolmistress, he having made a formal visit to my aunt, and having been presented by his affianced with all due observance and punctilio. But on this occasion he came on a more intimate footing, and without the panoply of etiquette and ceremony which it had pleased him to assume at first. "M'sieu'," without his mail of proof, was a very genial simple creature, with more of youthful freshness and romantic chivalry than I have often seen remaining in dashing cavaliers of half his years. He was a handsome man of fifty, with high clear-cut fea-

tures, a florid skin, and the bluest of blue eyes.

"I take it very kind of you, Mr. Bogie," said my aunt, thus pronouncing his patronymic in all simplicity and good faith: "very kind, that you should have come to us in this friendly way, and I hope you'll be able to make yourself comfortable among us."

M'sieu' was at home in a minute.

"Ah, Elise!" said he, sitting cosily beside Miss Wokenham, in the glow of the firelight, "dese is de scenes dat makes us ruggerret to leave England."

"Yes, indeed," she replied; "I can't commend your grammar, but your sentiment is mine exactly.—I shall never get him to talk good English, Mrs. Gough, no more than he will ever teach me to pronounce good

French; and *that*'s speaking pretty strongly, as you would know if you had ever heard my attempts."

"She speaks very well, Madame," interrupted her bridegroom elect. "She can say 'oui,' and 'je t'aime,' and dat's so much French as I ask of her."

While we were laughing at this, and Miss Wokenham was protesting, with unnecessary vehemence, that she never said "je t'aime" to *him*, and was declaring that her friends would think she had taken leave of the last remnant of her senses if he went on in that way, my uncle and Horace Lee entered together.

"I picked up this young gentleman on my way home from Oatlands; or, rather, he picked up me, for I was afoot and he driving

in Rotherwood's gig. He has been surveying, and measuring, and tramping through ploughed fields with a chain round his middle, or some such adornment, and——"

"—And he is not fit to come into the presence of ladies, Mrs. Gough," said Horace, finishing my uncle's speech. "But there was no refusing. You know how positive your lord and master can be on occasion."

"She know!" said my uncle, with a laugh. "O the sweet simplicity of three-and-twenty! As if a man was ever positive with his wife! But there, laddie, run to my room — you know the way—and polish yourself up before the candles come. No one has seen how you look yet."

It was quite dark, except just within range of the deep red glow from the hearth;

for we all loved the dreamy fitful firelight, and had sat talking by it until the faint grey ghost of day, peeping in at the windows, had melted into the dense blackness of a winter night.

"Where's Nanny?" asked my uncle, suddenly, when he was seated in his arm-chair, enjoying a tankard of hot mulled wine which aunt Gough had prepared with her own hands. Aunt was busy now, spicing a similar jorum for Mr. Lee, to warm him after the cold ploughed fields. "Where's Nanny? I haven't set eyes on her bonny face to-day."

She had been in the midst of us when they entered, but had vanished.

"Mademoiselle Anna was nearest de door when Monsieur Gough and Monsieur Lee

came in, and she sl-slapped away wizout one word. I rummarark it," said M'sieu'.

"Slapped away! My goodness, Lewis! Slipped, you mean—slipped away," cried Miss Wokenham, with comical consternation.

"Eh bien, sleeped," said De Beauguet, with perfect good humour, smiling round on us all: "she sleeped away quite quiet."

"We'll wake her up, wilful baggage!" said my uncle, who could not bear to miss Anna's bright face from the home circle, even for a moment. But almost as he spoke, the door opened, and my sister came in, followed by Horace Lee. "Why, where did you two run off to together?" asked uncle Gough. "Come here, sauce-box. This is a warm reception to give the master of the house, to run away as soon as he shows his face!"

"I overtook Miss Anna on the stairs as I was coming down, sir," Horace Lee explained, as he drew his chair up to the fire, next mine. I looked at my sister, and noticed that she had been to her room, to put on a scarlet ribbon which she sometimes wore in her dark curls, and which she had tied very archly and becomingly over one ear. Miss Wokenham, whose observation was singularly keen, noticed the ribbon too, but said nothing. Only I saw her watching Anna, with a curious intent look in her eyes, the whole evening. After all, the little harmless bit of coquetry was nothing very wonderful, especially in Anna, who made no secret of the pleasure she took in her own good looks. She was very handsome. And as she sat on the soft white rug at my uncle's feet, with

her pretty round arm leaning on his knee, and her animated face flushed and smiling, I thought I had never seen a bonnier sight, even in a picture. So thought uncle too, for he sat looking down upon her with a smile of positive enchantment.

"Sing us a song, Nanny," he said at last. "Let M'sieu' hear one of our Border ditties. Not scientific music, you know, M'sieu', but simple old songs, where the words and the tune seem to belong to each other, and to grow out of each other like the leaf and blossom of a flower. Sing us 'Sir Patrick Spence,' Nanny."

"Not if you call me Nanny," said she, pouting. "For my part, I don't know what is the use of one's godfathers and godmothers giving one a pretty name, if it's to be ugli-

fied into Nan and Nanny. I'd as soon be called Sukey."

"But pretty names are for pretty people. Don't you know that, Nanny? Well, there! Anna then. Don't flame up like a volcano, but sing us 'Sir Patrick Spence,' my bairn."

But Anna was ruffled, and would not sing "Sir Patrick Spence," or any other song Her temper was very capricious, and had been pampered by constant indulgence. My aunt and uncle began to coax her in their gentle loving way, and Monsieur De Beauguet added a polite hope that Mademoiselle would give him the great pleasure of hearing her charming voice; but she only shook her rich ringlets, and kept her eyes obstinately fixed on the floor.

"You ask her, Horace," said my uncle on a sudden. "Try if she won't sing for you."

Horace was sitting silent beside me, and had not seemed to hear the discussion. He had a very absent way with him sometimes and he sat playing with a little hair chain, twisting it round and round his fingers. It was mine. I wore it round my neck, supporting a gold locket which contained some of our dead parents' hair. Anna and I had each one alike. The clasp of mine had come unloosed, and it had fallen on the carpet. I did not replace it at once on my neck, and Horace took it up from the table where I had laid it, and sat twisting it as I have said. He started when my uncle spoke, but leaned forward directly and

said, "O, I beg pardon. Pray do sing, Miss Anna."

"What shall I sing?" she asked softly, lifting her head a little, but keeping her eyes cast down.

"There! You see you have succeeded, Horace," said my uncle. "I thought you would." But he looked surprised, and just a little hurt.

"Won't you sing what your uncle asked for?" demanded Horace.

"No. I'll sing The Yellow-haired Laddie," answered Anna decisively. She was just about to begin, when she glanced up at him, and stopped.

"Where did you get Margaret's chain? Put it down. I hate to see you twisting things backwards and for-

wards in your hands; it fidgets me to death."

Horace laid it down without a word, and there was a minute's silence. It was broken by Anna's clear vibrating tones, as she burst into an old legendary ballad, the name of which I have forgotten (it was not The Yellow-haired Laddie), but which was wild, and fierce, and stormy, and which she sang with amazing power and passion. As the last note thrilled through the room, she rose and went away without a word of good-night to any one, shutting the door sharply behind her. We were well used to her capricious moods, her sudden alternations of cloud and sunshine; but there was something strange and oppressive in this.

When our three guests bade us good-night,

intending to walk part of their way home in company, Miss Wokenham lingered behind with me, while De Beauguet and Horace were wrapping themselves to face the cold, in the hall. Aunt and uncle were both standing just outside the sitting-room door, and the maid had been sent to fetch Miss Wokenham's hood and mantle; so my old schoolmistress and I were alone together. She knelt up on a chair, and putting her two hands on my shoulders as I stood before her, looked earnestly into my face.

"I wonder," she said, slowly, "I wonder if my Philosophy is only a fair-weather sailor! I wonder whether her courage would rise into her head, or sink into her heels, if, all at once, in the midst of a prosperous voyage, avouring gales, halcyon seas, and the rest

of it, she were to hear the warning cry, 'Breakers ahead!'" Then, with a rapid change to her ordinary brisk manner, she added: "Why, what a sweet sage Margaret it is! You mustn't look so pale, my child. Good-night! God bless you!" And she was gone.

I hunted, before going to bed, for my hair chain. The locket was there, safe on the table, but I could not find the little guard that it used to hang upon. This vexed me rather, and Anna's unreasonable humour grieved me. I did not like her to be harshly judged by others, as I was afraid she would be. I lay awake a long time. But all the while, Miss Wokenham's words ran uneasily in my memory, like a haunting tune: Breakers ahead! Breakers ahead!

CHAPTER VI.

ONLY a short time intervened between that evening when Anna sang so wonderfully, and quitted the room so strangely, and the period fixed for Miss Wokenham's marriage. The approaching departure of our good friend naturally occupied our thoughts very much. It was a great event and excitement in the even tenor of our lives; and going to America was a much more serious matter in those days than it is now.

Miss Wokenham, however, was as brave and bright as possible; it was not until the very night before she went away that she

broke down, or lost the cheerful front we were familiar with.

"It isn't that I'm at all afraid, my dears," she sobbed out, "or that I have the least distrust of Lewis; but I am so fond of you all, and home is so very dear, and everything is so strange before me, and, of course, one must be a callous brute—and I hope I'm not *quite* that—to be able to take it all composedly, and—and I *can't* find my pocket handkerchief!"

My heart warmed to Monsieur de Beauguet when I saw him draw a bright-coloured bandana from his pocket, and gently wipe the little woman's streaming eyes, as if she had been a child. I could have hugged him when he afterwards applied the handkerchief to his own eyes with the utmost simplicity.

Somehow, I felt then that our dear little governess was safe with him.

They had at first intended to be married in Liverpool, and to spend a few days there before leaving England; but the merchantman they were going out in was to sail sooner than had been expected, and they would have no time to spare. So Miss Wokenham bade us good-by in her maiden character that last evening, and was married early the following morning. Dear uncle gave the bride away. He and my aunt were the only guests present in the church, by Miss Wokenham's expressed desire.

She had some relatives, a Mr. and Mrs. Parker — second cousins, I believe — who lived in a tall brick house just outside the town, and were very stiff and stately. Not

the less so, I dare say, that they had no particular reason for stiffness and stateliness. They were a childless old couple, sufficiently well-to-do in the world, and were mysteriously aggrieved by their relative's keeping a school. This injury, however, they kindly condoned, finding, possibly, some consolation in the reflection that her keeping a school relieved her friends from the necessity of keeping *her*. But the announcement of Miss Wokenham's intended marriage had shocked them—Mrs. Parker especially—to a frightful extent.

"You would have thought I had confessed to some awful crime, to hear cousin Sarah," said Miss Wokenham to my aunt. "She talked to me more like a jail chaplain than anything else. And after all, I should

like to know what difference it can make to them! They insinuated that I must not expect *now*, to inherit any of their money—just as if I ever had expected it; and they talked vaguely of ruin and disgrace in store for the family. However, I kept my temper pretty well till they began to be impertinent about Lewis, when I fired up, and told them he was a gentleman, whose shoes none of the Parkers were worthy to wipe. Therefore, you see, it would have been of no use asking cousin Sarah and her husband to my wedding. And indeed they shouldn't have come if they had wanted to, unless they made a handsome apology to M'sieu'."

So our little schoolmistress became a wife, unillumined by the lustre of the Parkers' presence or patronage. The breakfast was

given at the Gable House, and, at the last moment, when it was time for the travellers to depart, Horace Lee came hurrying in, flushed and panting, with a great nosegay of hot-house flowers in his hand, which he presented to the bride. The poor little soul was in a sad state of agitation by this time, and was clinging to my aunt as if she could never part from her, but she smiled through her tears when she saw Horace. He was always a great favourite of hers. "My goodness!" said she, with a spark of her wonted vivacity, "where did you get those glorious flowers? But your face is as bright as they are. I scarcely hoped to see you again. I thought you were at your father's for the week."

"Did you suppose I would let you leave

Willborough without saying good-by?" returned Horace. "I was up at six o'clock this morning, ransacking the green-houses at the Hall. When I told the head-gardener that I wanted some flowers to give to a bride, he took quite an interest in their selection, and said I was to gather what I chose. I galloped the new mare nearly all the way into Willborough. And now you must pay me for my posy, Madame De Beauguet."

To see the start the little woman gave when he called her by her new name! But she put her hands in his, and stood on tip-toe to be kissed, saying, "God bless you, my dear boy. I shall always like you, and keep you in my thoughts side by side with our beloved friends at the Gable House. You

know, I cannot express a higher regard than that, for any one."

More kisses and embraces, confused farewells, promises to write, thanks, tears, blessings, and our dear old friend was gone. The last glimpse I had of her, showed me her small form being lifted into the fly, by my uncle's strong arms. Good true friend! As large of heart as she was tiny of stature. What a giantess would Miss Wokenham have been, if her soul and body had borne proportion to one another!

For some days after the marriage, the whole household seemed unsettled; and Anna and I wandered about from the house to the gardens, and from the gardens to the orchard, and about and about, in a most desultory manner.

Old Stock had been forced so far to yield to age and rheumatism, as to accept the assistance of a permanent under-gardener, who was to receive his directions, and spare him the hardest part of the out-door work. It was a sore trial to him, until he discovered a mine of comfort in the alleged and assumed total incapacity of his assistant. This inexhaustible theme for grumbling seemed to afford him more enjoyment than anything, except his pipe. "Good morning, Stock," said I to him, a few days after Miss Wokenham's wedding. "What sort of a spring are we likely to have? And how are things looking with you here?" He was standing in the kitchen-garden—leaning on a great brown knotted stick, scarcely browner or more knotted than his hands—

inspecting the labours of his subordinate who was digging up a great potato-bed. It was one of Stock's rheumatic mornings, and he was unable to handle a spade himself.

"Spring, Miss Margrit!" growled the old man; "the spring 'll be all right, to be sure. The Lord 'll look after that. But as to how things is looking here—why, howiver is things *like* to look, when the master 'livers 'em over to the marcy of Bill Green? In course I knows *my* dooty:" (Stock was always comfortably satisfied on that point:) "My dooty's wrote out plain. It may be hard on a man as has sarved the master forty year, fur to see the soil turned up in that there fashion, like stirring furmety wi' a ladle; but if the master ordains as Bill

Green is to spoon the herth instead of spading it, why, spooned the herth must be."

"Don't be hard on Green, Stock," said I; "he'll improve, no doubt, with all the pains you will take to teach him."

"Pains! Ah, great pains an' little gains. Jist look at him now, Miss Margrit, a-standin' gapin' like a stuck pig, instead of arnin' his day's wage. Didn't ye niver see a young lady afore, ye great gaby?"

"I've see'd lots on 'em," returned Bill Green: a blue-eyed stolid young fellow, upon whom Stock's sarcasm or scolding appeared equally powerless to produce any impression.

"O, ye have, have ye? Then what are

ye standin' starin' at? Why don't ye try to do summut for your daily bread, thof it *be* but spoonin'?"

"I've digged this here bed, an' I dunno what's to do next," said Green.

Stock turned to me triumphantly.

"Ye see, ye see, Miss Margrit! That's the way! He ain't got no more notion of his dooties nor a babby. It's a marciful Providence as I'm able to git about to look after him. Come here along wi' me, Bill Green, and I'll pint out what mischief you and your spoon is to do next. Bring your spoon along with ye. Not as the Lord wills that the article should ever be missing where *you* are!" And the old man hobbled away to another part of his domains, followed by Bill Green, who confi-

dentially bestowed a broad grin on me as he departed.

Horace greatly relished Stock's eccentricities, and I got into the habit of treasuring up his odd sayings and doings, in order to repeat them to Horace. Horace was really witty. I have never known a more amusing companion than he could be when once he knew you well enough to cast off his shyness. He sometimes had fits of wild spirits that kept Uncle Gough in roars of laughter. But then, too, he was very easily moved to sympathy with anything sad. The tears would spring to his eyes in a moment at hearing a plaintive tune or a pathetic story. He rarely could refuse to give to a beggar, and was as tender as a woman with aged people and little children.

Uncle Gough used to say that Horace had one great fault; he could not say, No. "Wants ballast a bit, does the laddie," said uncle. "But, Lord help us! we all grow hard soon enough: and an old heart in a young bosom is worse than an old head upon young shoulders."

CHAPTER VII.

GRADUALLY I grew to join the thought of Horace with every incident in my life. When the lilies of the valley first peeped up under the shady side of the moss-grown orchard-wall, I said to myself: "How Horace will like to see them!"—for he loved flowers dearly. When old Bran, the watch-dog, crawled feebly into the parlour one day, for the first and last time in his life, and died with his faithful head on my uncle's feet, I thought, amidst my tears: "Horace will grieve for Bran." If I wore a brighter ribbon than usual, or any new piece

of girlish finery, I secretly wondered: "How will Horace like it?" I suppose this was "falling in love," but I did not know it. It was rather growing into love, gradually and gently, as the love of kindred—father, mother, brothers, sisters—grows up in our hearts, until it becomes a part of our nature, and we can no more remember when it was not there, than we can recal the days of our earliest infancy. Mine was not a passionate nature, but it was a clinging one. Love, with me, was not the fierce, devouring, over-mastering feeling that I have seen it in others. It grew to be a part of me: an ever-present, steady, strong affection, that claimed no passionate expression nor violent outbursts, but that lived in my life, and breathed in my breath,

and took root in my innermost and deepest heart of hearts. Yes, it was love that I felt for Horace Lee;—real, true, undying love. Undying, for O! a long life lies between those youthful days and this present time in which I write; and O! my Lucy for whom I write, I love him to this hour!

Although I can now, on looking back, clearly understand what were my own feelings, you must not suppose that I did so at nineteen. I never thought of "questioning my heart," or "analysing my inner consciousness," or of attempting any of the profound metaphysical problems which—the circulating library informs me—the girls of this generation are accustomed to solve; insomuch that sometimes I feel almost afraid lest they should "analyse" all their

emotions away, or lose the sweet evanescent freshness of them, and leave only a little earthy deposit at the bottom of the crucible. But when I look around me, and see eyes as bright, and cheeks as blooming, as those other eyes and cheeks I saw so long ago, I believe that fresh unsophisticated hearts come, according to the goodness of God, to gladden the earth as naturally as the daisies; and I revert to my old comforting conviction, that when youth and love quite go out of the world, the world itself must go out too.

I look back on that girl at the Gable House as on another creature. I smile at her follies and simplicities, and weep at her sorrows, and grieve over the bitter days that lie before her. Ah, how young she seems,

with her nineteen years, and how old am I, Aunt Margaret!

Well! As I have said, Horace Lee became the central figure in my life; his presence made me quietly glad, and I loved my dear guardians and benefactors the better that they also loved him. But it was all unconsciously, or at least without thought, on my part. Horace was like a son of the house, and uncle used to call him and Anna his two spoiled bairns. Anna had given way to no outbreaks of temper since that stormy night of her wilfulness about the singing; and we hoped that as she grew older she was gaining self-control and gentleness. My thoughts often recurred to what Miss Wokenham had said to me on that same evening, and I wondered what

"breakers ahead" she could have foreseen, or fancied she foresaw. I came at last to the conclusion, that she dreaded trouble for us all from Anna's violent temper, knowing, as she well did, how unchecked by firm opposition that fiery spirit had been from babyhood. I wished that our good friend could have seen how pleasant a change had come over my sister within the last two months. I mentally resolved to give her a glowing account of Anna's improvement when I should write to Canada, so as to convey to her that I understood what she had meant by her warning, and to assure her that her anxiety had been overstrained and needless. Altogether, that winter evening was frequently in my mind, for from it I dated the loss of my little hair chain.

Search was made for it on the following morning, but vainly; and then the preparations for our old school-mistress's wedding had sufficiently occupied us all, from the kitchen-maid up to dear Aunt Gough.

Old Mr. Lee came occasionally to see us, and to express to my aunt and uncle his sense of their kindness and hospitality towards his son.

"Horace is doing well at Rotherwood's," said the old gentleman. "At least, so they tell me. Sir Robert"—this was the great baronet, Mr. Lee's employer—"Sir Robert sent for Horace to the Hall the other day, to speak about a little matter of business, the draining of Meadow Leas, and Sir Robert had him into the drawing-room—

into the drawing-room where my lady was sitting—and made him stop to luncheon."

We were all uncomfortably dumb in a moment, and I felt, without looking at him, that Horace was crimson. But Mr. Lee went on in his usual self-satisfied way, in happy ignorance of the misery we were feeling.

"He stayed in the drawing-room, where my lady was, full twenty minutes—from that to half an hour, wasn't it, Horace?—and Sir Robert shook hands with him when he came away. Very gratifying. But they always have been pleased to entertain a great respect (however unmerited) for *me*."

Somehow or other, the fonder I grew of Horace, the more I shrank from Mr. Lee. I must have appeared a mere fool in his

eyes, for a perfect pall of silence and shyness seemed to envelop me from head to foot when I was in his presence. Anna, on the contrary, who always was less diffident than I,—and with good reason, for she was a bright, winning creature, with the lively frank manner that had never known a chill or a rebuff,—Anna would laugh and chat and play off her pretty airs on the old gentleman with astonishing vivacity. He admired her vastly, and called her all manner of "sylphs," and "nymphs," and "cruel charmers," and "fair enslavers:" compliments over which Anna used to go into fits of laughter in private. But she seemed determined to fascinate Mr. Lee, and she certainly succeeded.

One day, when the spring was pretty far

advanced, and the young leaves and the tender grass had put forth their first fresh delicious green, Mr. Lee appeared at the Gable House early in the forenoon. He had his chaise at the door, he said, and was come to ask my aunt to do him the honour of taking a drive. She had been ailing somewhat during the last week, and he thought that the bright sun and fresh air would do her good.

"Do go, dear aunty," said we, and my uncle joined us in urging her.

"I will take you to a farm of one of Sir Robert's tenants, where I have business," said Mr. Lee, "and the good people of the house will be proud to offer you some homely refreshment, as a friend of *mine*. I am to sleep in Willborough to-night, and

will drive you back before it grows dusk. There is—ahem!—there is a third seat behind, and if one of the young ladies would accompany us——"

It was comical to see the look he gave me. It said, "Don't *you* come," so plainly. I involuntarily answered the look, by exclaiming, "Oh no, of course Anna will go." But Anna wished me to have the pleasure of the drive, and protested she would not care to go and leave me at home. "That is nonsense, dear," said I. "Do you go, and take care of aunty, and make her wrap up. Perhaps Mr. Lee will take me some other day." A proposal to which Mr. Lee, in his gladness at escaping my companionship for the present, politely and even cordially assented. So it was settled that Anna

should go ; and I helped to put warm wraps into the little open chaise, in case the spring evening should turn chilly as they came home; and I stood watching them as they drove away: Anna's dark ringlets waving about her pretty face, and her mouth pursed up into a ridiculous grimace in imitation of the unconscious Mr. Lee, who sat square and stately before her.

There never was lack of occupation at the Gable House. Aunt Gough had made us familiar with all housewifely lore, and my sister and I were proud of our skill as housekeepers. My morning, therefore passed busily away. After giving my uncle his early dinner, and seeing him established with his pipe and the London newspaper in the dining-room, I took my knitting and

went into the garden to enjoy the brightness of the sunny afternoon. I wandered all over the grounds, through the shrubbery, into the orchard where the happy little birds were chirping and twittering in the gnarled old fruit-trees. I marked the early flowers dotting the borders with brilliant spots of colour ; and I peered with keen interest at the promise of a great plenty of roses, displayed by the standard trees upon the lawn. It was all so dear and so familiar to me ! I knew every nook in the place, every time-tinted patch in the old brick walls, every shrub, every bough, almost every leaf. As I came slowly back towards the house, I stopped to pick a bunch of broad-faced daisies that grew luxuriantly on a tiny green mound in a sunny corner of the shrubbery

It was a very tiny mound, with a white upright stone at one end of it, whereon the syllable VIC was engraven. Poor little Vixen lay beneath it, her fiery barkings and quaint gambols stilled for ever. "Vic," said I, half aloud, "I am glad to know that you were a very happy little dog." And then I began to think of our childish days, when Anna and Vic were such fast friends and joyous playmates. I remembered the great battle of the porch, and Stock's signal defeat, and then I thought of *my* discomfiture and poor Dolly's deadly peril. Coming to the said porch at that moment, I went inside it and sat down. Though it was yet early in the year, the afternoon sun falling on that side of the house, and beating on the yellow space of gravel—still the pride of

Stock's heart—made the shade pleasant. The click of my knitting-needles grew slower and slower, and at length ceased. I had fallen into a drowsy kind of reverie. I was given to day-dreams then. All sorts of pictures of my childhood's days, and of people and places I knew, came into my head and passed away to be succeeded by other pictures. I was conscious of a lazy kind of curiosity as to what I should see next, when I heard a step on the gravel path. It was not old Stock's heavy tread this time, but a light rapid footfall.—I well knew whose.

"I thought I should find you here," said Horace, coming out of the sunlight to my side.

"Did you? I have not been in the porch

before, this year; but this lovely afternoon tempted me. Aunty and Anna are gone to drive with your father."

"Yes, I know it. I am glad Mrs. Gough consented to go. I believe the air will do her good."

He had come eagerly into the porch as though he had been seeking me, wishing to say something; but now he sat silent, trifling with the ball of knitting-worsted that had lain on my lap. I have mentioned that he had an absent trick of turning and twisting things in his fingers.

"What you are doing now, reminds me,' I told him, "of my hair chain. Do you know, I have never been able to find it, since that night when you made Anna

nervous by playing with it? Isn't it strange?"

He put his hand into his breast, and turned his eyes upon me with a look that made my colour rise and my heart beat faster.

"Margaret"—O the tenderness in his voice! How sweet my name sounded!—"Margaret, shall I tell you something? Here is your chain. I have had it next my heart ever since that night." He drew it forth, and held it out to me. A great joy began to flood my soul, but it was my nature to distrust such happiness. I could not accept it all at once; it seemed too great to believe in. So I tremblingly held out my hand for the chain, with a slight exclamation of surprise.

"No," said Horace, drawing nearer to me, "not till you have heard why I took it. You have not asked me that, Margaret. Do you know?"

I shook my head. I was past speaking.

"Can you guess?"

My tears began to blind me, and I could not keep down a sob. He threw his arms around me, and held me to his breast.

"Because it had been yours; because it had clasped your throat; because the poorest ribbon you could wear, the glove that had touched your hand, the flower you had gathered and thrown away, would be dear and precious to me; because I love you, Margaret!"

O those words, those dear, dear words! O that happy time, that happy, happy time!

"Horace," I whispered, after a while, "Prince Goldenheart is come at last." For he knew the story of my childish play, and had often laughed over it with me.

"*Is* it Prince Goldenheart?" he said. "Well; he should have a heart of gold who woos my Margaret. Thank God, at all events, there is no wicked fairy to blight *my* gentle Princess, or to stand between her and her love."

As he spoke, a shadow blotted out the evening light; and when it had passed, the sun had set.

"Who was that?" I asked, looking up.

"Why, they have come home! Is it so late? It was your sister Anna."

"They have come home? Then they must have driven round into the stable-yard,

and come into the house by the back way. I dare say Anna was looking for me. I must go now, Horace. Please let me."

I felt much as the child of twelve years before had felt, when old Stock, personifying the work-a-day world of reality, broke in upon her fairy story. We had been dreaming such a beautiful dream, Horace and I, all to ourselves, that for the moment it seemed a hardship to come out of that enchanted realm, and face the common aspect of accustomed things. "Just one instant, Margaret!" He held both my hands clasped in one of his, and stood with his other hand laid softly on my head, looking down upon me.

"Aunty will wonder what has become of me."

"Answer me this one question. Do you really, really, love me?"

"O Horace! have I not said so?"

"Say it again! Once more—only once!"

"May I go if I say it again? Do you promise?"

"I promise, darling."

I released myself from his hold, and drew down the hand that rested on my head; then, leaning my two hands upon his shoulders, I raised my face to his, and kissed him, darting away next moment at full speed, and never stopping until I had flown across the hall, and along the stone-flagged passage that led to the morning-room. I paused outside the door, suddenly conscious of flushed cheeks and dishevelled hair, and panting from my swift run. I heard voices

laughing and talking within, and, re-assured by the conviction that they were not thinking of me, I stole up to my own chamber to bathe my face and smooth my hair. When I came down again, and entered the morning-room, the tea-table was spread there, and Horace was seated beside my aunt, who was leaning back in her large arm-chair with an air of weariness. Anna was there, and my uncle was there, and Mr. Lee.

"Dear aunty, are you tired? Have you had a pleasant day?" said I, hastening to her.

"Where have you been, Madge, my love? Anna was looking for you. Will you make the tea, and offer Mr. Lee some cold meat? I had a very agreeable drive, but I am a thought tired now, my dear."

So, the business of the tea-table came opportunely to cover my confusion. After I had attended to our guest, I took courage to glance at Horace. He had been waiting on my aunt, holding her tea-cup, drawing forward a folding screen to shield her from the scorching blaze of the wood fire—my uncle never relinquished evening fires until quite midsummer—and placing a broad cushion beneath her feet. Now he sat beside her, with his handsome head bent down to listen to her soft slow speech. How I loved him! How beautiful the gentle deference of his youth and strength to her weakness and age appeared in my eyes! Anna was chatting gaily with uncle Gough and Mr. Lee; but she kept looking across at my aunt and Horace, as if she too

thought the picture they presented a pleasant one.

"We have been to such a dear old farmhouse, Madge," said Anna. "Such a quaint, queer, uncomfortable, picturesque old place! Meadow Leas it is called. The drive there is pretty, too. I did so enjoy it."

"The good farmer and his dame were truly proud and delighted to entertain Mrs. Gough and your sister," said Mr. Lee. "Hospitable kind souls, poor things!"

"Hospitable! Yes, indeed, Madge. I never saw such heaps of food as they spread on the table. Pies, and cheese, and cream, and ham, and butter, and ale, and bread. I was frightened when I saw the piled-up platter of rabbit pasty they put before me. And they expected me to eat it all!"

"You must go some day, Margaret dear," said my aunt. "I'm sure you would enjoy it. Farmer Gibson and his wife have all manner of pets that you would delight in."

Old Mr. Lee was to sleep at the Blue Bell, where he always put up when he came to Willborough; and he withdrew early.

"I have business to attend to to-morrow, that will cause me to be up betimes, my good madam," he said to aunt in his tiresome way. "You will therefore excuse me if I take my leave now. Late hours do not suit me. They interfere with that clearness of brain which is essential to the transaction of important business."

I was very glad to see him rise to depart, for late hours did not agree with aunt Gough any more than they did with him, and she

had been looking very weary for some time past.

"Horace," Mr. Lee continued, "I shall see you in the morning. Our ways lie in different directions to-night. I shall have a message to deliver to you from Sir Robert. Good-night, my dear madam. Nay, nay," in reply to some murmured thanks from my aunt, "only too glad to have afforded you a day's pleasure. Farewell, Miss Anna. I am sure you will not soon be forgotten at Meadow Leas. A vision of youth and beauty bursting on the—hem! What is the word? No matter, you understand me. Good-night, Mrs. Gough. And good-night to *you,* Miss Sedley." He had very nearly omitted his parting salutation to me altogether; but I could not let Horace's father go without a

farewell, that night, of all nights; so I had emerged from my nook behind the tea-table. Mr. Lee tried to look as if he had been purposely reserving the pleasure of shaking hands with me for the last, and had meant to come round to my side of the room if I would but have awaited him patiently. But I am afraid I must make the humiliating confession, that I believe he had quite forgotten I was present.

My aunt rose as soon as Mr. Lee had departed, and said she would go to bed. She seemed very feeble when she got upon her feet, and I began to fear that the day's exertion had been too much for her. Horace gave her his arm to the room door, and then I think my uncle observed her weakness with some anxiety. "Shall I carry you up-

stairs, my dear?" he said. "It wouldn't be for the first time."

"No, love, no; I am not so dead tired as that. Madge will come with me. Good-night, all. I shall be strong again to-morrow after a night's rest." So I went up the wide old-fashioned staircase with my aunt, she leaning on my arm; and we made the journey slowly, though the ascent was far from being a steep one.

Anna had seemed inclined to linger a little; but Horace was pre-occupied, and did not talk; and my uncle's dear face had a rather troubled look as his eyes followed his wife's slow steps out of the room. Anna, to whom silence and dulness were always intolerable, forthwith began to yawn, and followed us up-stairs almost immediately

Horace remained in the morning-room, and I saw in his eyes, and I felt in the parting pressure of his hand, that he would speak in the fulness of his heart to my uncle, before he went away that night. The thought made me a little nervous and agitated, though Heaven knows I had never had cause to dread my dear guardian and benefactor. I longed to speak to aunt Gough, and tell her of my great happiness, and receive the sweet motherly sympathy that she had ever been ready to lavish on me from my childish days; but she seemed so fatigued and unstrung that I dared not venture to excite her that night for my selfish pleasure. I remained with her until her eyes were closed and her head lay placidly on the pillow; then, lamp in hand, I

crossed the broad landing to my bed-chamber.

Anna and I shared a large, low, oak-pannelled room with three deep windows looking on to the lawn. Our white-curtained beds stood side by side on an island of crimson carpet, relieved against the darkness of the polished floor. I found that my sister was already in bed, and apparently asleep; so, shading the lamp with my hand, I walked softly to the dressing-table, and looked in the glass. It was a large old-fashioned oval mirror, set in a black carved swing frame. How plainly it all comes back to me! I can see the blue gleam of moonlight that slanted in at the many-paned windows, and threw a fantastic pattern on the oaken boards; I can see the wide

stretch of garden and shrubbery, shimmering ghost-like out of a silver veil of mist; I can see the long shadows of the trees rocking and swaying noiselessly on the lawn, as the trees themselves moved with a soft whispering sound in the night-breeze; I can smell the fragrance of a bunch of rich brown wall-flowers that stood in a china vase on the window-sill. It all fixed itself in my mind during the moment in which I set my lamp upon the dressing-table, and tilted down the glass to an angle at which I could see my face reflected in it. Not a touch or tint in that picture has faded in fifty years. "This, then, is the happy girl whom Horace loves!" said I to myself, looking at the face which looked at me out of the dark sea-green depths of the mirror. I knew

very well that it was not a beautiful face. I knew very well that it was scarcely even pretty. But it was irradiated now, with a light that transfigured it. "O I am so glad!" I whispered through my blissful tears. "I almost believe that being so dearly loved, and loving so dearly, will make me grow pretty." Then I bent forward and put my lips to the cold surface of the glass, and said, "That means good-night for Horace!"

I turned away from the glass with a heart full of happy thoughts, and yet my tears fell fast. Anna was lying asleep on her white bed, and, as I looked at her lovely fresh face in its nest of rippling hair, I yearned to tell my joy to anything so sweet and young and beautiful, to receive her sisterly kiss, and to

feel the clasp of her arms around my neck, as I had felt it many a time when she had come to me to be soothed in some baby sorrow, and we had fallen asleep together. I thought I could tell her better, if I put out the light; therefore, when I was undressed I extinguished the lamp and kneeled down by her bedside. The moonlight shone into the chamber, and her hand and arm, tossed carelessly outside the coverlet, were bathed in a flood of pale brightness; but her face was in shadow.

"Anna," I said in a low voice, putting my cheek down on hers, "Anna, I have something to tell you."

She did not answer me, although I felt instinctively that she was awake.

"Anna, darling! It is something that

makes me very, very happy, and I cannot sleep without telling you."

She breathed quicker, and the white hand that lay in the moonlight clenched itself.

"Don't be frightened, dear. It is good, good news I have to tell you."

No reply. The cheek on which mine rested, turned a little away, but she did not speak.

"Anna, Horace Lee loves me. He has told me so!"

She dashed herself out of my arms, turning so as to bury her face in the pillow, and the moonlit hand went up into the black shadow around her head, and stayed there.

"Why did you wake me, Margaret? I was asleep. I was dreaming. I was so

happy, and now you have awakened me, and I shall never, never dream that dream again."

"Anna, my pet, my child, I did not know you were sleeping so soundly. I did not mean to disturb you. Don't cry, my dear, don't cry!" For she was sobbing and moaning fretfully.

"Don't speak to me, Margaret. Get to rest. Say what you have to say, to-morrow. I—I can't understand you now. I am tired, and you have awakened me, and I was dreaming pleasantly, and now my dream is gone!"

She pushed me irritably from her. My heart felt very heavy. It was such a sudden chill, after my glow of joy and tenderness. But, with the habitual yielding to her which

was common to us all, I quietly rose up from my knees and went to my own bed. "I ought not to have roused her," I said to myself as I lay down. "She was tired and sleepy, and she is such a child!" Once, I stretched out my hand to touch her, and, as she remained perfectly still, I hoped she was sleeping. Gradually I grew drowsy, and my eyes closed, and my ears lost their vigilance, and the sweetness of Horace's smile, as he had held me in his arms that day, with the dancing shadows of the leaves upon his head, faded and faded, and melted away. But all night long, at intervals, I had an uneasy sense of disquietude and restlessness, and a fancy that some one was moving about the room. Once, I dreamed that Anna was pacing up and down, her

bare feet pattering lightly but distinctly on the polished floor. But when I started, and sat up and looked around, everything was still, and I could hear no footstep, and the moon had set, and it was very dark.

CHAPTER VIII.

"I NEVER saw a piece of knitting in such a mess in all my life! What *were* you thinking of, Madge?"

Aunt Gough uttered this mild pleasantry in the fulness of her satisfaction, some days after that happy evening on which Horace had told me that he loved me. They all knew it now. Dear uncle had kissed and blessed me, mingling with his tender words some prudent cautions as to the necessity of waiting, and as to our youth and inexperience. But he was pleased. I knew that, and the knowledge made me inexpressibly

happy. As for waiting, that was not hard to my mind. Of course we were young. Of course we were inexperienced, and without settled prospects in the world. But we loved each other, and our love was approved by those whom we most honoured and regarded. Surely that was happiness enough, to fill years of waiting, should years be necessary. Horace was not quite so contented to accept Uncle Gough's words of wisdom. He chafed a little, in his impetuous way, at being told of his youth and inexperience.

"Young!" he said to me, when we were walking alone together. "Does your uncle know that I am turned three-and-twenty?" Horace looked very solemn as he announced his attainment of this venerable age. "If

he had said that I'm not good enough, there might have been some reason in it. But if my dear girl is content to take me only because I love her better than all the world beside——"

"No; because I love *you*, Horace."

"My own Margaret! If you are content, angel that you are, I don't see who need object."

"Dear Horace, be reasonable. Can anything be more kind and generous than Uncle Gough's behaviour? Of course he is right when he says that our youth——"

"There it is. Our youth! The fact is, fifty-five is getting to be thought the right age for love and marriage. I wish I was as old as De Beauguet. Upon my soul I do!"

"Perhaps, Horace, in that case the objection might come from *me*, and not from uncle."

"I always say absurd things when I am angry," said Horace, wiping his eyes after an outbreak of laughter. "Everybody does."

I don't know whether everybody does, but I know Horace did. And what could be more absurd than the idea of his ever being fifty-five? My bright impulsive Horace! All this brings me back to Aunt Gough, and my tangled knitting. One of the servants had found it in the porch and taken it to my aunt; and she, divining the circumstances under which my work had got into such a chaotic state, resolved to have her small joke at my expense. Horace

and I were sitting with her now, having come in from the walk in which we had held the foregoing discussion as to the necessity for patient waiting.

"What *have* you been doing with your knitting?" said aunt. "I wonder who is expected to wear a stocking like that!"

"O, aunty, it was Horace. He was twisting it about in his fingers."

"And, pray, how came Horace to get hold of your knitting? I hope you don't mean to knit *his* stockings in that way, or he will think I have made but a poor housewife of you, after all my pains."

"Do give me a chance of testing her soon, Mrs. Gough," cried Horace, eagerly, improving the occasion. "We have been having quite a dispute, Margaret and I, and I am

afraid Mr. Gough is all on her side. Do throw in your influence on mine. Do take my view of the case!"

Horace went over all his arguments to prove that we were both rather elderly, and to show that in three months, at the utmost, his prospects would be sufficiently assured to justify him in taking a wife. He was very eloquent in his pleadings. At least I thought so, and so, I suspect, did Aunt Gough. The truth is, Horace could be much more eloquent in speaking to her, than he could be in speaking to my uncle. I have said that Aunt Gough was highly sympathetic. And sympathy was to Horace the atmosphere in which he lived and breathed easily. There are strong militant natures to whom strife and the hope of victory are

bracing and pleasant; but his was never one of them.

My aunt had been ailing ever since the visit to Meadow Leas. We could not trace any signs of positive disorder, but she got no stronger, had no appetite, and was incapable of active exertion. This was the only cloud in our heaven. This, and Anna.

My sister had been so variable and uncertain in her humour, since that evening when I spoke to her in her bed, as to try my aunt sorely. Her own temper was the sweetest and most placid in the world, but her nerves were unstrung, and she was liable to swoon on unusual excitement. Anna was not always angry, not always sullen, not always tearful, not always

unaccountably gay and boisterous, but all these moods chased each other across her mind with startling rapidity. She was especially inconsistent towards Horace. At one time she would be so sweet and sisterly to him, as to make our hearts glad within us. Next moment, the merest trifle, the turning of a straw, something so slight as to be imperceptible to us, would ruffle her, and she would chafe and frown and treat him with an arrogant scorn that wounded me beyond measure. Once, I was angered out of patience, and spoke to her sharply, in Horace's presence. To my surprise, she was soft and humble in a moment, coming and kneeling by me with her face hidden in my lap.

"Margaret, I love you!" she said, in so

low a voice that I, with my head bent down to hers, could hardly hear it.

"My dear, I know you do. But, Anna, because you love me, you should be good to Horace." The dark clustering curls on my knee shook themselves petulantly from side to side. "Yes, Anna. I am sure he is very good to you. And you know he is to be your brother. Come! Give him your hand and be friends." With her face still hidden, she suffered me to take her cold little fingers, and put them into Horace's outstretched palm; and so there was peace again for a time. But all this, as I have said, was trying to my aunt. Uncle Gough saw less of it than she did; but even he saw enough to distress him.

"I tell ye what, my bairn," he said to

Anna, "a little change will do you good. I'm thinking you're not quite well, Nanny. I shall pack you off to Meadow Leas for a week or two, and beg farmer Gibson to feed you entirely on strong ale and rabbit pasty. You're growing as slender as a hazel-wand, my bonny bairnie."

"I'm not a bit ill," returned Anna decisively. "But I think I should like to go to Meadow Leas."

The idea was acceptable to us all. It had already occurred to me, that Anna's excessive irritability might be owing to incipient illness; and, indeed, she was looking worn and thin. So it was decided that she should go to Meadow Leas for a week or two.

I have not yet said anything as to the

manner in which old Mr. Lee received the announcement of my engagement to his son. In truth, it is not a topic on which I am able to say much, for Horace would never exactly tell me what his father's words had been; but I gathered that he had expressed some disappointment in the matter. It must have been on the score of my personal demerits, for I knew that an alliance with the family of James Gough of the Gable House was, in a social sense, the best he could have expected for his son. However, the old gentleman was all cordiality to my uncle, and all condescension to me. He treated me with elaborate, I may almost say oppressive, politeness—when he thought of it. Sometimes, however, he did not think of it. And I am afraid I liked

those times best. He readily undertook to make the necessary arrangements for Anna's stay with the good people at Meadow Leas. But, before she went away, we had two pleasant surprises. One was a letter from our dear friend in Canada; the other, which concerned Horace, I shall come to presently.

Dear little Madame de Beauguet wrote most cheerfully, and there was no mistaking the fact that she was a perfectly happy woman. They had not long arrived out when her letter had been written, but she had a great deal to say about her new home already, and about her "goodman."

"Do you remember your giving him that title?" she wrote. Her letter was addressed

to my aunt. "*I* do. And nothing ever was more appropriate. Put the strongest possible accent on the first syllable, or on the second syllable, or on both syllables, and you will be perfectly right all ways. He is the best creature in the world. Am I not a fortunate woman ?"

Then our old governess sent kind love to Philosophy and Will-o'-the-wisp, and made many inquiries about Horace,—"that most charming and civil of young civil engineers," as she called him. "Tell him that I have his parting flowers safely pressed in a book, and prize them above every thing; and that my good-man says he hopes no young lady will be jealous when she hears it."

This set us wondering whether M'sieu had discovered Horace's secret—*our* secret

—and then they all laughed, and we wandered off into happy foolish talk about ourselves. Madame de Beauguet's pleasant letter having been read, and re-read, and discussed in full family council with great relish, then Horace brought forth his news. And this was the second surprise.

"I have had a letter from Mr. Topps of Birmingham, sir," he said, addressing my uncle.

"From Mr. Topps, eh? I didn't know you kept up any correspondence with Mr. Topps."

"No, not exactly correspondence; but this is a business letter."

There was a look of triumph in Horace's eyes as he handed it to my uncle: though he assumed a sober unconcerned manner,

as who should say that to a man of his age and position, a business letter from Mr. Topps was an every-day kind of matter.

"Am I to read it?"

"If you please, sir."

"What is it, Horace?" I asked, eagerly. But he hushed me with a motion of his hand, and we all waited silently until my uncle had finished reading the letter.

"Well, my boy, I am very much pleased with this. Indeed I am." My uncle took off his spectacles, and held out his strong right hand to Horace, giving him a hearty grip. "It does you credit, and you may justly be proud of it."

"I *am* proud of it, sir," answered Horace, with ingenuous glee. "I am glad that you should see—that you should have this oppor-

tunity of convincing yourself—that is, I mean, that my prospects——"

"Yes, yes, I know. You are proud and glad that I should be made to understand on such excellent authority, what a trustworthy responsible rising gentleman I am to have for a nephew, and what a very slow old coach I must be to think it well for him to wait one single day, before taking all the cares of the world on his shoulders! That's it, isn't it, laddie?"

Horace coloured, but answered with a smile: "Well, you have put it in your own words, sir, but I suppose that *is* it."

"And now, mayn't We know something of this great business?" asked my aunt, from among the cushions in her arm-chair.

Then Uncle Gough, with Horace's full

consent, told us what were the contents of Mr. Topps's letter. That distinguished engineer retained a kindly remembrance and a high opinion of his former pupil, and was willing to put a good thing in his way when the occasion presented itself. There were some new waterworks to be erected in a small northern town just on this side of the Scottish Border, and Mr. Topps had been applied to, to find some competent person to design and superintend their erection. He himself was much too "eminent and expensive," as Mr. Lee might have said, to be asked to undertake the business. But the chairman of the waterworks company, being acquainted with the great Birmingham engineer, had written to ask his advice. "And my advice is, that they should employ you,

Lee," wrote Mr. Topps in his letter. "I have every confidence in you, and, if you will undertake it, it may lead to better things."

Better things! What could be better?

So I thought. But to Mr. Topps, from his eminence, probably the whole matter looked small enough.

"What does Rotherwood say to it?" asked my uncle.

"Well, sir, he sees no objection to my taking it. Clinch, his articled pupil, can do all such work as I have been doing during the last half year."

The only drawback to our happiness was, that Horace would have to go to the north, and remain there some time. But that would not be just yet. Some six months

must elapse before the arrangements could be so far advanced as to necessitate his presence. And six months seemed quite a long time to look forward to, when I was nineteen.

CHAPTER IX.

I WAS once told, when I was a very little girl—too little to be told so—that I should find good and evil, joy and sorrow, succeed each other throughout my life, with the regularity of the chequers on a chess-board. I have found this true in the main: true in the sense in which it was intended to be understood: but I have never found it to be an accurate illustration of the alternations of bright and dark in our daily existence. The dark spots have come to me—and, thank God! the bright spots too—but by no means with the rigidity of outline and

regularity of succession, suggested by the chess-board simile. Absolute blackness has been rare—rarer perhaps on the whole than absolute whiteness. I have known both. But they were divided from each other by infinite gradations of more or less neutral tints, and not by sharp well-defined lines, where the black ceased and the white began. In truth, I think that sharp well-defined lines are not common, either in nature or human nature.

I am led to remember the "chess-board," by thinking of the cloud that came over us soon after our pride and triumph in Horace's good fortune. Dear Aunt Gough grew very ill. Still without any special disorder that could be discovered, or that the family doctor chose to define to us; but very weak

and very ill. She seldom left her chamber now, and, Anna being away, I was with her a great deal. She would sometimes feebly protest against the constancy of my attendance on her; but I said, and said truly, that I could not have been happy if I had left her to receive loving care from other hands.

"It is but selfishness after all, dear aunty, for, as soon as I am away from you, I begin to fidget, and to fancy that something has been forgotten which ought to have been remembered, or something left undone which ought to have been done. And then my self-conceit brings me back to see to things myself."

"But Horace will think *me* very selfish, my love, if I engross you altogether. That must not be."

"I am sure he will not think that, aunt. Besides, Horace has been away a good deal, himself, lately."

It was true that Horace had been away a good deal lately—away from Willborough. Before he should take his departure for the north, there were two or three matters to which Mr. Rotherwood wished him to give his personal superintendence. Among others, there was the draining of Meadow Leas. I have said that Mr. Rotherwood desired it, but Mr. Lee was very anxious, too, that Horace should see to it himself. Had not Sir Robert sent for him to the Hall purposely to speak of it? Had he not shaken hands with him, and presented him to my lady in the drawing-room? "Clinch could do it, all right enough," said Horace. But

nevertheless, thus influenced, he went himself to Meadow Leas. So it followed that what with his frequent absence, and what with my attendance on my aunt, we were not quite so much together as would otherwise have been natural in our position. But he rode over from his father's house (where he was staying to be near his work), almost every day, and brought my aunt many a beautiful gift of fruit and flowers from the greenhouses at the Hall. Horticulture had not then advanced to the rank of a fine art, but Mr. McGee, Sir Robert's Scotch gardener, had some pretensions to science notwithstanding, and I can bear testimony to the perfume of his roses, and their beauties of form, colour, and size. These floral offerings gave great offence to Stock, who lost

no opportunity of decrying Mr. McGee's professional skill with much bitterness.

One evening my aunt had fallen into a doze, having desired, before she composed herself to rest, that I would go out and get a breath of air. So, after stationing one of the maids in the room with injunctions to call me when my aunt should awake, I went down stairs and passed through the kitchen in order to reach the garden by the back way. The servants were enjoying the pleasant evening hour, after the business of the day, and the maids were sewing and gossiping over their work. Stock sat near the open window, in an appropriately hard Windsor chair, with his pipe in his mouth, contemplating the glories of the kitchen garden. I never passed Stock without a few words

of greeting. I had a knowledge—how acquired, it would be hard to say, for never by word or look was he apt to show any touch of tenderness—that the old man had a soft corner in his heart for my sister and me.

"Stock, how well your early vegetables are looking!"

"I'm not sure as you knows much about it, Miss Margrit."

"I hope I know a little, Stock, a very little."

"Vara little," said Stock.

"The peas, for instance. Are they not unusually promising?"

"There's a Providence above all peas," returned Stock, "and equally above banes. An' it's fort'nate as there be."

Stock had not the least idea of being

irreverent. But he was given to solemn-sounding phraseology, and believed, I fancy, that there was something vaguely meritorious in the use of pious words—words not especially applicable to the matter in hand, but which seemed of themselves to impart an odour of sanctity to his discourse, be it what it might. Stock was an ignorant narrow-minded old man, no doubt. But I have since heard pious talk, conducted on much the same principles, by people with the means of knowing better.

"It's fort'nate as there be, or it's little peas nor yet banes, as the master 'ud have see'd on table this year. Bill Green, he done his best to ruin of 'em; but there's a Providence beyond Bill Green."

It was so well understood by this time

that Stock's revilings of his subordinate were to be taken as mere figures of speech, expressing more his own consciousness of old age and rheumatism than anything else, that no one uplifted a voice in defence of Bill Green: who, by the way, was as honest and hard-working a lad as could be found.

"I'm going into the garden, Stock," said I, "to get a fresh posy for my aunt." This was an indiscreet speech.

"Ah!" growled Stock, "the missus she don't want no posies out of this here garden. Not now, she don't."

"O yes, she does, Stock. She thinks no flowers so sweet as her own."

"No more there bain't. None. The missus is right there, Miss Margrit. I knows summut about flowers, or I ought to

it, and I'll 'fy all England to grow sweeter flowers nor ourn. But it ain't sweetness now, nor yet *com*pleteness, as is the hobject wi' some. It's to have 'em wallopin' big uns. That's the hobject. You grow your flowers wallopers, an' you'll do."

"I don't think that, Stock."

"Well, Miss Margrit, I ain't a goin' to try it, whether or no. I allus done my dooty, and I allus means to. I say as them flowers as young Master Lee brings here is wallopers, and nothin' else *but* wallopers. And I say, as one o' the 'lect, that I shan't find no wallopers where *I*'m a goin' to. Me—and a few more—we shan't be called upon to keep company with wallopers."

"Mr. Lee only meant to give my aunt pleasure, Stock; I'm sure he always admires

the gardens at the Gable House. And you must not say anything unkind of Mr. Lee, Stock, because I love him very much, and I'm going to be married to him, you know."

"Ah sure. Well, well, well. No, I han't got nothin' to say agin young Mr. Lee. Goin' to be married," he pursued musingly. "Little Miss Margrit. Ah, sure! Well, my dear, may the Lord—have marcy upon ye!"

This was not exactly encouraging. But I understood Stock very well; and though his deep-set black eyes looked stern, and no muscle of his hard brown face was softened, yet I knew that the old man had a tender place in his heart for the orphan girl he had known so many years. I passed on to the

garden, and was busy gathering my nosegay, when I heard the clatter of a horse's hoofs entering the stable-yard, and almost at the same moment a window in my room was softly opened, and Hester the maid called to me that my aunt was awake, and that Dr. Dickson was with her. "I will come in a few minutes, Hester, before the Doctor goes." As she turned away, and shut the window, Horace came hurrying across the lawn, all booted and spurred, from his ride.

"My dearest Margaret! I am so glad to find you here! Each time I have come lately, you have been mewed up in a close chamber."

"Dear Horace, I am very well. It does me no harm."

"It does *me* harm, for I see so little of you. And how is Mrs. Gough?"

"Dr. Dixon is with her now, and I am going in, to hear his report."

"Going in! It seems to me, Margaret, that you grudge every moment you give to me." He had drawn my arm through his, and we were slowly pacing down the garden walk; I, with my basket of freshly gathered flowers in my hand.

"O my dear Horace!"

"Well, it does seem so. Of course it is right that you should be kind and attentive to your aunt. I am sure I am nearly as fond of her as you are. But you seem so indifferent, Margaret: as if you didn't care to be with me!"

His tone was petulant, irritable, and un-

like himself; looking at him more closely, I saw that he seemed harassed, and was very pale, now that the flush of exercise had faded from his face.

"O, Horace!"

If I could have told him but a tenth part of the joy it gave me to be with him! But no, I could not. And yet the tone of his voice, the sound of his footfall, the glance of his eye, made my heart overflow with happiness. And surely he might have known this. If he did not, I could not make him know it by any words of protestation. I have said that it was my weakness to be too keenly sensitive to reproof, especially where my affections were concerned. I always saw that *other side* of things too plainly. What he thought and felt, was almost as vividly

within my perception as were my own thoughts and feelings; but though I knew he was wrong, I could not plead my cause. It would have been better to have spoken frankly and fearlessly, setting forth the strength of my love; it would have been better, even, to have grown angry, and flamed up at him as my sister might have done. But I could only withdraw into myself, and bear my hurt in silence.

We walked to the end of the path, without speaking, and, when we turned to go back towards the house, he suddenly took me in his arms, upsetting the flower-basket, and scattering its contents upon the gravel. "No, my darling!" he said. "Don't mind me. I don't believe it."

"Believe what, Horace?"

"That you are anything but the sweetest, dearest, truest, most unselfish girl in the world."

"I am not that, Horace; but do me justice. At least I am not indifferent."

"No, no, no, my own love. I am sure you are not. Forgive me."

We kissed each other with wet cheeks, like two children, as we were.

"Look at my poor flowers, you bad boy. There! Put them all in the basket. I would not have old Stock see one blossom lying trampled on the ground, for more than I can tell. I must not keep Dr. Dixon any longer. You will come to aunt's room when she sends for you, and tell us all about Anna? Of course you see her constantly?"

"Yes; I—have seen her. *Must* you go now?"

I only shook my head in answer, and ran into the house. Uncle Gough was in my aunt's room when I reached it, and Dr. Dixon. The doctor was a mild middle-aged man, well known and much respected in Willborough. He was the brother of that Mr. Dixon, the organist, of whom I said in my childhood that he "played so kindly."

"Good evening, Miss Sedley." The doctor stretched out his right hand, which held a leather driving glove. I had never seen Dr. Dixon with that glove on, in my life, but he always carried it.

"How do you find my aunt, sir?'

"Mrs. Gough is better, decidedly better.

If we can get a little strength, a little tone, we shall do very well."

"I am so glad!"

"Yes; a little tone. Do you know what I've been proposing to your uncle, Miss Sedley?"

"Proposing! Nay, it's all fixed and settled, lassie," put in my uncle, who was sitting by his wife's chair, gently smoothing her frail hand with his broad heavy one.

"I've been proposing," continued the doctor, who had a mildly obstinate way of sticking to his own form of words, "that Mrs. Gough should go for some months to the sea-side. To get tone; a little tone, you know."

"I believe it would do her great good, Dr. Dixon."

"Yes, yes; that's the thing, Madge," said my uncle. "She shall go, next week, to Beachington. I wonder we didn't think of it before."

"It wouldn't have done before, my good friend," said Dr. Dixon. "It is early in the season even yet. But I have been proposing something else, Miss Sedley."

"No, no," interrupted my aunt faintly. 'I won't allow it."

"Pardon me, my dear madam. I have also been proposing, Miss Sedley, that you should accompany her."

Accompany her! Go away from Horace during the short time he had yet to stay in Willborough! I felt ashamed of my selfishness even as I thought this.

"Of course I will go with her, Dr. Dixon, if she will let me."

"It is too bad to ask the dear child," said aunt Gough. My uncle looked at me wistfully. "I'm loth to part the bairn from her sweetheart," said he. "But yet I know she'd wish to do whatever she could for her good aunt. She's the best lassie in the world, doctor."

"My kind darling uncle," said I, "pray, pray, don't speak in that way, as if you were asking any favour of me. I am thankful and rejoiced to be of use."

"Of the very greatest use, Miss Sedley," said Dr. Dixon, taking up his hat. "You are very patient, very gentle, and very pleasant to look at—three inestimable qualities in a nurse." And with those

words the doctor betook himself downstairs.

"Bless thee, my bairn," said my uncle.

"Horace will never forgive me," said my aunt; "but he'll have Madge to himself all his life, and perhaps I may not be here to trouble him much longer."

CHAPTER X.

SEA and sky, sky and sea, sea and sky!

Deep blue, or pale green, livid under the clouds, dazzling in the sunshine, sleeping with a slow long-drawn respiration beneath the moonlight, dashing yeasty foam mast high over slanting sails reddened by the dawn; beautiful, terrible, wonderful always, the great waters lay stretched out before my eyes for many, many weeks. From my chamber window at Beachington I looked forth upon them, every night and morning. There was nothing to interrupt my gaze, as I strained it to the far horizon. I have

stood looking, looking, looking, until all the life within me seemed to concentrate itself in my eyes, and I felt as though I were floating poised like a sea-gull in mid air, with the fathomless heavens above me, and the fathomless ocean beneath me. O, sea and sky! O, sky and sea! O, the small throbbing human heart within, and the vast heaving waves without! O, the old, old story!

My aunt had borne the journey from Willborough—it was not a long one—better than we had thought she would; and, for the first fortnight of our stay at Beachington her improvement was most rapid and encouraging. After that, she sank again a little; but they told us these fluctuations were to be expected, and we were hopeful.

My uncle remained at the Gable House. He came with us to Beachington and saw us settled in our new abode; then, he returned to Willborough; and Anna came back from Meadow Leas and kept house for him. I had left home with a heavy heart—heavier than the mere temporary separation from Horace should have made it; for he had parted from me almost in anger. I cannot say that he absolutely thought I ought to have refused to accompany my aunt, but he seemed to think that I ought to have made it very evident how much the going cost me. And how could I do that, without wounding my beloved benefactors!

"Horace," I said, "think, pray think, what they have been to us two sisters. It

seems to me that an almost more scrupulous performance of loving duty is due from Anna and me to them, than if they were in truth our parents."

"Duty! Yes; duty is your god, Margaret. You will weigh out the affection you owe, even to the last scruple, in the scale of duty. So much for my aunt; so much for my uncle; so many drachms for Horace; good measure for Horace; he is to be my husband. Margaret, if you knew what real love was, you could not be so calm and cold at parting."

I assigned what excuses I could for him, but I came away with a heavy heart. His first letters, after my departure, made me sweet amends. They were so full of love and sympathy, of kindly inquiries for my

aunt, and affectionate solicitude for me, that I resolved to be happy again. My aunt, too, was apparently gaining strength, so the first days of our stay at Beachington were bright enough. We had brought a letter from Dr. Dixon to a brother practitioner at Beachington, one Mr. Bertram Norcliffe. This gentleman, besides being skilful in his profession, was an accomplished scholar, renowned for his acquaintance with Greek and Latin and the modern tongues. When Dr. Dixon told us about him before we left home, we declared we should be frightened to speak to so awful a personage. But we found ourselves quite able to speak to him, and soon came to like him very much. He was not young—nearly as old as Dr. Dixon, I dare say; but he was unmarried, and lived

alone in a beautiful house some three miles inland from Beachington. He took an interest in my aunt's case, and, as he said it was essential that she should be kept cheerful and amused, he would come and sit with us, evening after evening, talking so unaffectedly and pleasantly that we entirely forgot all about his learning.

Of course we mentioned Mr. Norcliffe frequently, in our letters home. At least, aunty did, when she was able to write; and she generally added a few lines with her own hand to my weekly report to my uncle. In those times, the postman was not so frequent an apparition at everybody's door as he is now. A letter was a serious matter, either to send or receive. And, besides, between us and Willborough there was an awkward

cross-country post, so that I seldom despatched a packet to the Gable House oftener than once a week. Horace's movements were very uncertain, as he flitted about between Willborough and Meadow Leas and the Hall. He even made a flying visit to the North, to consult with the chairman of the Water Works Company, and to reconnoitre his ground; and he accomplished the double journey thither and back again, and transacted his business, all within the space of five days. We thought this a very wonderful achievement. (I forget how few hours are requisite to do it in now.) As Horace seemed to have no settled abode, I generally sent my letters to him under cover to uncle Gough or to Anna at the Gable House, and I frequently

received his, through their hands, in the same way.

Gradually, by slow degrees—degrees it was as impossible for me to trace as the shifting hues of sunset on the western waves, which began with rosy lustre, and left the deep waters dark—I found a change in my lover's letters. It seemed as if some spell were cast over him—as if a shadow had interposed itself between him and me—and then one dreary fortnight passed, and he did not write at all! But I fought against the dread that lay coiled up coldly at the bottom of my heart, and I endeavoured to be cheerful. How good my aunt was! How patient, how unselfish. I have never seen recorded the story of a purer, sweeter life than Lucy Gough's. You, my godchild, are named

after her. Hers was the large heart, which, cleaving strongly to its own, yet could embrace all suffering souls in a divine rapture of charity. As you go through life, you will meet devoted wives who grudge hard-earned fame and fortune to their husband's peers; admiring sisters, who delight to jeer at their brothers' rivals in the race of life; doating mothers who, wrapping their own little ones warmly in the soft shelter of maternal love, will yet bring themselves to turn a cold stern front on the forlorn defenceless infancy that peeps in, shivering, from the hard outer world, at the bright flame burning on the hearth of home. But not of these was my aunt. Perhaps my own trouble taught me to understand and value her, better than I had ever done before. Such lessons, sorrow

comes to teach. The worst was, I could not quite keep it to myself. "Has Horace written this week? What does he say?" She would question me thus, and I could not always keep back tears, though I tried hard. I tried very hard.

It was now drawing very near the time at which I understood Horace was to take his departure for the north—within a day or two, as I reckoned—and I was feverishly hoping for a letter. A packet had come from the Gable House one morning, directed in Anna's hand, and containing a long letter from my uncle, and a short note from Anna for my aunt. But nothing from Horace; not one word. There was an incomprehensible allusion to my indolence as a letter-writer, made by my uncle. "Madge is a good correspondent to

me, my love," he said, writing to my aunt, "but urge her not to let us old folks engross all her pretty letters. I think Horace feels hurt." What did this mean? I could not understand it.

The day had been oppressively hot, and the moonless night came down from a brooding sultry sky. We sat with open windows, listening to the plash, plash, of the tide upon the shingle, and catching now and again, through the gathering darkness, the distant flash of some white-crested wave leaping high above its fellows. Mr. Norcliffe was with us, and we had all been sitting silent for some minutes.

"How the sea booms to-night," I said. "Is it not a hollow, threatening noise?"

"Yes," he answered, "I know the sound well. We shall have a storm."

While he was yet speaking, rapid wheels and hoofs grated on the road beneath the windows, and a post-chaise stopped before the door.

I heard a voice telling the postilion to stop.

"Why, it is uncle!"

I started up breathless.

"James!" cried my aunt with a scared look, "what can have brought him here?"

"O I know, I know," I exclaimed, "Horace must be with him—he has come to say good-by; he has come to see me before he goes!"

I was rushing to the room-door, when it opened, and my uncle stood before me, alone. I know not what wild thoughts whirled

through my brain. I turned giddy. I saw his pale rigid face, and my heart stood still.

"Horace!" I gasped out, "He is dead!"

"My bairn! My bairn!"

"He is dead, and you have kept me from him!" My own voice sounded hoarse and strange in my own ears.

"Margaret! My beloved child, be strong, be brave."

"Tell me the truth. He is mine. I have a right to know. Is he dead?"

I clutched my uncle's arm. At the touch of my hand, his locked mouth broke from its fixed lines with the terrible convulsion that comes upon a strong man when he weeps.

"No, Margaret, he is not dead. But he is

gone—fled—fled away with Anna—and he is a damned black villain!"

The boom of the sea grew into a great roar, thick darkness came over me, and I fell down senseless.

CHAPTER XI.

AT nineteen, life is very vigorous within us. Let the soul be harrowed and the mind tortured as they may, the body will yet struggle to throw off its load of suffering. My youth and strength asserted themselves, and physical illness was not added to the anguish of my heart's sorrow. It was otherwise with my aunt. Her frail tenure of life was sorely weakened by the shock, and we watched at her bedside with a dumb foreboding. Anxiety for her, and the necessity of attending on her, took me out of myself. The sharp present pain sometimes dulled

that other heartache for a moment. But there were hours when my wounded love awoke and cried within me with an exceeding bitter cry; and the moaning voice of the vast eternal sea seemed but the echo of my little human woe. At first I could not speak of it. I could not think of it. I could only feel it. But by degrees I lost the overpowering sensation of terror that possessed me at the first agonising aspect of my grief, and slowly dared to look it in the face. For three days after my uncle's arrival, I was as one in a dream. Mechanically I went about my daily duties, and said no word, and asked no question. Mr. Norcliffe was constantly in the house, fulfilling the duties of a physician and friend with unobtrusive kindness. I think it was by his advice that they

left me to myself, and forbore to speak until I should be prepared to hear. At last, as I have said, I took courage to look my trouble in the face, and I resolved to know all they could tell me. "I will hear it at once," I said, "and then——"

And then ?—

I could see nothing beyond. The long vista of my future years had held one figure journeying by my side. No matter through what trials we still should walk together. That had been my dream of life.

"Uncle," I said one night when the household were preparing to go to rest, and my aunt had fallen into a heavy slumber after a restless day, "will you come with me out on the beach for a little while ? Aunt is asleep, and the servant shall stay in her room till I

come back. I want to speak to you, and I feel as if I should be stifled in the house. Will you come?" He pressed my hand in his, took up his hat, and silently we went down stairs. A short flight of rough stone steps led down from the terrace on which the house stood, to the shore, and, once upon the wide beach, we were in absolute solitude. It was a warm dark night, with phosphorescent gleams upon the water. The soft wind, blowing seaward from the land, brought with it sweet wafts of country odours. Slowly, slowly, and in silence, we paced onward, until a turn in the shore showed us a distant light-house blinking with its red eyes far into the night.

"Dear uncle, I want you to tell me——"

"To tell you, my dear bairn?" For I had

stopped and stood silent with my hand upon his arm.

"To tell me all about——Horace and my sister. I will only ask you this once, and then it will be over."

"I am glad you have spoken, Madge. It would have been my feeling to have had it all out before now. But others thought differently, and perhaps they were right."

"Yes, uncle; quite right. And—and—I want to beg one thing of you." He took my trembling hand and held it in a firm though gentle clasp. "I want you to try not to say things like—like——"

"What things, my darling?"

"Such as you said that night of Horace. I know what you must feel; but O, dear uncle, I beseech of you not to say hard things

of Horace to me." I was sobbing with my head upon his breast.

"How shall I speak the truth and not say hard things of him ?" returned my uncle bitterly. "But there, there, my beloved child. Heaven knows I would not willingly add to your burden. I will do my best, Madge."

Then, brokenly and with difficulty, he told me what he knew about my sister's flight. "I suspected nothing," he said, "nothing in the world. It must have begun when they were so much together at Meadow Leas. He seemed moody, and did not spend so much time as formerly at the Gable House. At least, not with my knowledge. God knows what went on behind my back. Anna had full liberty, and as for him, he was like a son of the house." By degrees, I heard all

that he could tell me. They had not left Willborough together. Horace had started by the night coach for his northern destination, and Anna must have met him at some preconcerted point upon the road. She was not missed for some time, having given out to the servants that she was going to spend a few days with the Gibsons at Meadow Leas. Neither my uncle nor I had the heart to follow all the windings of the scheme. A few hours after he had missed her, and had begun to feel uneasy at her absence, he received a hurried letter in Anna's hand, saying that any attempt at pursuit would be worse than useless, as before those lines could reach Willborough she and he would have crossed the Scottish Border, and got married. "I was half crazed," said my uncle. "As to

sitting still at home, I could no more have done it than I could have flown to Scotland, and seized the throat of yon——; well, well, I won't say it, my lassie. But that's what I longed to do at first. When it fairly came home to me that it was too late, I just flung myself into a postchaise to come to you and your aunt. Talk of a man's strength! Yes, if fighting be the cue. But for endurance, why, the bravest of us is fain to lean on you frail creatures when Sorrow comes and sits herself down in the ingle nook."

In all that my uncle said and left unsaid, I could trace the deep wound that Anna had given to his proud affection. He had loved her so. He had so gloried in her beauty and her high spirit, and even in her untamed vehement temper. He loved me fondly, and

felt for me. No sympathy could have been deeper, more tender, more unfailing, than his. But, for himself, the bitter smart was this: —that her hand should have dealt the blow. That she should be false, treacherous, ungrateful! His pet, his bonny bairn, his darling! Strive as he would to throw the blame on Horace, there was a rankling sense of her unworthiness that wrung his kind heart cruelly, cruelly. Never again, on the rare occasions when my sister's name was mentioned between us, did I hear him speak of her by the familiar appellation of her childhood. It was "your sister," or "Mrs. Lee," or "Anna." Never Nan, or Nanny. Never, never, again.

When Uncle Gough had ceased speaking, there was a long silence between us. At last

I rose (we had been sitting on a heap of loose stones) and took his arm. "Thank you, uncle," I said. "You are very good to me."

"Good to thee, my precious bairn!" All his full heart gushed out in a burst of tears and inarticulate ejaculations. He took me in his arms, as if I had been indeed the bairn he called me, and wailed over me as a mother over her sick child. We wept together until the passion had spent itself, and something like peace came down upon our souls. And, as we walked slowly homeward, the first glimpse of that, "*and then*," began to dawn upon me.

What if, though the bright glory of my morning were quenched for ever, there still remained long twilight hours to turn to

account, ere the night cometh when no man can work! I was still very weak, very heart-sick, very miserable; but there was already a faint ray of comfort in the thought that I might yet be dear and useful to others.

When we reached home, the servant of the house was standing at the door looking for us, and she ran forward to say that her mistress was with my aunt, and that some one had been despatched for the doctor, as Mrs. Gough was awake, and seemed "mortal bad." We were with her immediately, and Mr. Norcliffe arrived soon after; but the first glimpse of her face told me, inexperienced though I was, that human skill was powerless to prolong her life. She died peacefully in my uncle's arms that night.

CHAPTER XII.

WE went back to the old house, Uncle Gough and I, to the quaint old house at Willborough, taking the shadow of our sorrow and our loss with us. I pass by the first pain of looking on the familiar scenes and faces with our changed eyes; I pass by the grief of the servants, the condolences of friends, the sympathy of humble neighbours. As my uncle had said, now that Sorrow had sat herself down in our ingle nook, it was to me that he looked for consolation. He was a man peculiarly sensitive to a woman's influence, and peculiarly needing a woman's

sympathy. Soft and unassuming as his wife's character had been, he had leaned on her for support in the every-day affairs of life, and had turned, in any trouble, to the never-failing solace of her wifely love. Now, she was dead, and Anna was gone, and Horace, whom he had loved so well, was cast out for ever from his home and from his heart, and there was no one but I left to fill the vacant places. What a sad autumn was that which followed our return to the Gable House! The summer had waned before we left Beachington, and my uncle and I used to wander arm-in-arm along the garden paths and through the shrubbery, ankle-deep in fallen leaves. He seldom cared to pass the iron gates into Willborough, and few strangers crossed our threshold. But, once,

old Mr. Lee came. He came one sunny afternoon, soon after our return home. I, sitting sewing by the window in the morning-room, heard the gate bell ring, and looked out to see who the unwonted visitor might be. I stood up trembling, and my work dropped upon the floor.

"Margaret, what is it?" asked my uncle, looking at my scared face; then, following the direction of my glance, he, too, saw Mr. Lee, who was now almost at the porch.

"I can't bear to see him, uncle. What shall I do? Let me go away."

"Yes, child," said my uncle, with his brow knitted into the stern troubled look it often wore now. "Go, dear. He shall not disturb you. Why does he come here at all?

It was a bitter hour when any of his name first darkened these doors."

I hurried away up stairs, my knees shaking under me, and shut myself into my own room. There I stayed for above an hour, sitting motionless and dry-eyed on the bed, with a dull sick feeling at my heart. At last Hester came up stairs and knocked at my door.

"Your uncle's love, Miss, and do you feel well enough to come and give him his tea?"

Then I knew that Mr. Lee was gone, and I arose and went down to my uncle. He said not a word at the time about his visitor; but I learned afterwards that the interview had been a stormy one. Mr. Lee, while deprecating the conduct of his son, had tried to act as mediator between Horace and my

uncle, endeavouring to show that continued resentment on the part of the latter could only hurt himself, and was really uncalled for. That the thing was done and could not be undone—"which," said my uncle, "was the sting of the whole matter"—and so forth. But it finally appeared that his chief object in coming had been to ascertain whether Anna's marriage would make any difference in the amount of her prospective inheritance. My uncle had always announced that my sister and I were to be the joint inheritors of what property he had to leave, and that it would be divided equally between us.

"I told him," said my uncle, speaking of this to me afterwards, "I told him that neither your sister nor her husband would

ever be the richer by one penny of my money. She and he have chosen their way, and must pursue it together. But never, with my consent, shall any help go from me to them, either during my life or after my death. I have one niece, one child, one heiress. He wanted to see you, feeling sure, he said, that *you* would not wish this. But I told him, if you were an angel I was none, and that in this matter I would have my own way. So he left me."

I tried, of course, to alter my uncle's resolution. What was the money to me? But whenever I reverted, even distantly, to the subject, he grew so fierce and terrible in his anger against her, that I was fain to cease my pleadings, and leave it to time to soften him more effectually than any poor words of

mine could. So, the autumn and the winter and the spring wore away, and the summer came round again in its appointed course. Twice during the year Mr. Norcliffe had come to see us, and on his last visit had pained me by asking me to be his wife. Pained me, because my own trouble made me tender to the genuine feeling of an honest heart. And it could never, never be.

"I don't ask for love, Miss Sedley," he said. "I know and respect your feelings. But if you could ever bring yourself to think of me—if you could give me any hope that time might change your resolution—you would make me a very happy man."

I think I did not fully know what my love for Horace had been, nor fully realise how that part of my life was lost to me, until I

received this proposal. My uncle would have encouraged it; and Mr. Norcliffe was a man every way my superior, and I was very sensible of the great honour he did me when he placed this high confidence and trust in me. But all that was over. I assured him that my marrying was impossible, then and thereafter. He took it like the fine-natured gentleman he was. And the last words he said to me on that occasion were these:

"Miss Sedley, if you ever need a friend's advice, or a brother's protection, will you believe that I should esteem it my dearest privilege to afford you both? Will you tell me you trust me enough to ask me for them?"

This I could most heartily and gratefully assure him.

There had been several letters from Anna

to my uncle, and there had been one directed in Horace's hand. But uncle Gough thrust them all unopened into the fire, holding them firmly in the blaze until the last fragment was consumed. My heart yearned sometimes for news of my sister. I had been thinking, dreaming, musing on her, and on Horace, all the year; and, as my first anguish softened, I began to ask myself if this estrangement were to go on all through our lives. He had loved her best. Was she not more beautiful, more attractive, than I? I thought sometimes that if they had only come to me, and had only confessed that they loved each other, and had asked that I should release Horace from his promise, I could have done it.

One bright day I had persuaded my uncle

to drive some miles out of town, to a small property he had in a neighbouring village, consisting of a few cottages and some pasture land. One of his tenants had desired to see him on, I know not what, business connected with some trifling repairs. It would be a change, an occupation, an excuse for a short absence from home. I dreaded to see him entirely lose his once active habits, and sit dreaming in the house day after day. I urged him to drive over to the village, and, having seen him set off in his high gig with the old mare, fat and frolicsome after her long rest, I took advantage of his absence to go into Willborough and make some housekeeping purchases. I had almost completed my task, and was nearing the Gable House on my way back, when I remembered that

cook had asked for some sweet herbs, and I went into a shop to get them. We all know how subtle and potent is a familiar odour to awaken sleeping memories in the brain, and the smell of that shop invariably took me back to the market-day when Anna had gaily thrust a fragrant bunch of herbs over my uncle's shoulder, and we had first seen Horace Lee. O me! how long, how long ago, it seemed!

The good woman who served me, put up what I wanted; and then, as I took the little parcel in my hand, she said:

"So we've got your sister back among us, Miss Sedley."

"My sister!"

I suppose my face turned very white, for I felt the blood rush back to my heart, and

the woman looked at me with a startled expression,

"Dear life, Miss! I hope I haven't done wrong to mention it. I never thought but what you knew. Will you sit down a moment, Miss?"

"No, no, thank you. But tell me—when did they—I mean how long——"

"How long they've been here?" said the woman, helping out my unfinished sentence. "Well, I'm not rightly sure, but it must be going on nigh a week. My master, he seen young Mr. Lee at Rotherwood's door last Thursday. They're staying there, I take it."

I thanked her and hurried out of the shop. As soon as I reached home, I shut myself into my room, and, without removing my hat and cloak, sat down to think. I should run

the risk of meeting them, unprepared, at any moment. I knew too well that any idea of my uncle's admitting them beneath his roof, was hopeless as yet. But I did not think he would forbid me to see my sister. Did he know of her being there? I scarcely thought he could; he had so resolutely set his face against all mention of her name by any one whomsoever. It behoved me to consider how I should act. Could I bear it? Could I see him as my sister's husband? How would they receive me if I went? I revolved all the aspects of the question without coming to any decision, when, on a sudden, my heart cried out: "She is your sister, she is the motherless companion of your infancy, she is the only living being of your blood you have to cling to. Go to

her!" I listened to my heart's voice, and arose, and went forth upon the urging of that strong impulse. I hastened out at the iron gates, and took my way along the street to the house the woman had mentioned. Mr. Rotherwood's offices were on the ground floor, and (his dwelling-house being in another part of the town) the upper stories had been hitherto disused. But now, as I glanced at the windows, I saw white curtains there, and signs of habitation. I would not stop for a moment, nor slacken in my pace, lest I should turn coward and go back without fulfilling my purpose. I reached the private door, almost breathless with my speed, and, having knocked, was admitted by a little country servant, who stared at me with all her round eyes.

"Is—your mistress—within?"

Only at the moment of asking the question, did I remember that I must now speak of Anna as Mrs. Horace Lee. With strange unaccountable inconsistency, I, who was coming there to heal the past, and offer reconciliation, could not make that smaller effort of calling my sister by his name.

"Yes," said the girl, with her wondering eyes still fixed upon my face: "she is at home."

"I know her. I am a friend. Let me go up."

I pushed her aside, and ran up the staircase, and into the sitting-room which faced it, and there—nursing a tiny infant at her breast, and singing softly to it, in the old sweet voice—sat my sister Anna.

"Margaret!"

She rose and faced me. The deep red blood rushed over her face and neck, and then, receding, left her deadly pale.

"O Anna! I did not know this. You are a mother, Anna! O Anna, Anna! let me kiss your child."

With sobs, and half-uttered words, and passionate embraces, we clung together, holding the little baby between us. And so we wept, and wept, until, thank God! the flowing tears washed from my innermost soul the last lingering bitterness of anger.

When we grew calmer and could speak to each other—that was not for a long time—Anna asked me if Uncle Gough were coming, and if he knew of my visit? But,

in her quick way, she read the answer in my face before I could utter it, and drew back with the curved haughty lip I knew so well.

"Ah, no. I see. He is still hard and implacable, and vindictive. Well, we must endure it. That is all."

"Hush, hush, Anna! Do not speak so; I cannot hear it. Tell me about yourself. How old is your baby? What is its name?"

"Poor little thing! She is very wee and frail, isn't she? Only two months old. We came away from the north, as soon as I was able to travel. She is called Lily."

I remembered Horace having once told me that his mother's name had been Lilias. As I looked more closely at my sister, and

as her face recovered itself after the strong emotion of our meeting, I saw that she was thin and worn. She was very lovely, with the rich dark curls clustering round her forehead, and her lustrous brown eyes that looked larger than ever, from the thinness of her face; but her cheek was very pale, and there were lines of care and suffering about her mouth, and the mark on her forehead, which told of the frequent contraction of her handsome brows, had deepened.

"Little Lily, poor small Lily, little fair white Lily, you don't know me; do you? I am Aunt Margaret; and you must be very good to me, and love me very much."

I had taken the infant in my arms, and I hushed it until it fell into a slumber, when

Anna told me to place it on a couch in the room that was prepared for it with pillows and a light warm shawl.

"Hark!" cried Anna, as I laid the sleeping baby down; "that is his step. Here is Horace."

I have a confused remembrance of breathing a hurried prayer for strength, while that footstep mounted the stair; and then his hand was on the lock, and he stood before us. Anna advanced to meet him, and put her hands upon his shoulders; but his eye had lighted upon me, where I stood trembling like some guilty creature. Dashing down the papers he carried in his hand, he put his wife aside, and with a cry which I shall never forget, sprang across the room and clasped me in his arms. It was so

sudden, that for a second I was powerless to move. But almost instantly I released myself from his embrace, and, retreating a step or two, held out my hand. I was astonished at my own strength, now that the test had come.

"Forgive me," said Horace, passing his hand over his forehead, "it was so unexpected. I—I did not know what I was doing when I caught sight of your face Forgive me."

"Forgive you!" cried a voice, so hard and strained, that I started, scarcely knowing it for my sister's. She stood looking at us, and her dark brows were knit, and her eyes flashed menacingly, and I saw what the change was that the year had made in Anna's face. All the youth had gone out of it.

"Forgive you!" she exclaimed. "Do you remember that your wife is present? Has the sight of Margaret so overwhelmed you, as to blot out from your memory the past twelve months?"

Horace dropped my hand and turned towards her.

"No, no, no," he answered. "I have not forgotten, Anna, that you are my wife."

Something in his tone jarred upon her irritable nerves and set her in a flame. The old furious temper took possession of her, and shook her slender figure. She heaped reproaches on us both, until I stood aghast to hear her.

"You had best be silent, Margaret," said Horace, turning to me. "She is a mad woman while the fit is on her."

He then sat motionless, with his head bowed upon his hands. Anna's loud angry tones awoke the child, who set up a piteous wail. I stooped to take it in my arms and soothe it; but she snatched it from me, and pressed it to her breast with a fierce clasp.

"She is mine, my child. You shall not touch her! Her love, at least, I can claim." Then, turning to her husband: "You are a weak fool. Do you think I cannot see what old infatuation has come back at the sight of Margaret? You are a weak fool. What was her love to mine? She never loved you. Why, at this moment, see how calm she stands! What did she ever do to prove her love? Would *she* have planned, schemed, defrauded, lied, to win you?"

"Stop, Anna, in Heaven's name!" cried Horace, rising. "Say no more while this mad temper possesses you. Spare us, and spare yourself."

"No; I will not spare myself. I did plan, I did scheme, I did defraud, I did lie. I was false to my sister, to my uncle, to every one. There was nothing I would not have done or risked for you, because I loved you so, and because it seemed as if my great love *must* win yours in the end."

"If neither for my sake nor your own, then for our child's, I beseech you to command yourself," said Horace.

The vehemence of her passion had so exhausted her that she burst into a storm of hysterical sobs, and fell back upon the couch with the baby wailing and moaning in her

arms. Horace went to her and motioned me away as I advanced:

"Go now, Margaret. You can do no good," he said softly. And indeed Anna's sobs redoubled at my approach, and she shrank away from me. "Go, and try to forget this miserable scene. God ever bless you for coming, Margaret. Don't ——" he hesitated, and then went on in a lower voice—"don't quite desert us. We deserve nothing at your hands, but you are not one to balance that bitter truth against our need of you. And —and—for the sake of this innocent little one, don't desert us, Margaret. Don't quite desert us."

I went away from the room and from the house; and, out of the dark sea of sorrow around me, only one thought rose clearly

into my mind. That he had loved me, until she turned his heart against me. That he had been deceived. That he had not been coldly false.

For some days after, I hesitated whether or not I should tell my uncle that I had been to see Anna. Had my visit ended peacefully, or given me any hope of happier relations arising between us, I would have risked his short-lived anger, and confessed the truth at once. But I shrank from the idea of a recurrence of such harrowing scenes. I could not tell whether he knew of Horace's return to Willborough; but I thought it almost impossible that he should still be ignorant of it. So the week went by, and I was still undecided. At last I resolved to let Uncle Gough know by indirect means.

So I requested Stock to gather some choice wall fruit, for which the gardens of the Gable House were famous, as I wished to send a present to a friend. The old man brought the fruit wrapped in vine leaves to the morning-room, where I was sitting, and where Uncle Gough was deep in the perusal of the weekly Gazette from London. Poor Stock was very feeble now, and bent by rheumatism. My aunt's death had been a real grief to the old man, whose few attachments were very strong and lasting.

"I've been an' got what's left on 'em, Miss Margrit. They bain't like they used to be, but the Lord's will be done!"

"Thank you, Stock. They look very fine, I think."

"Ah, look! If looks was all, some on us

'ud stand but a poor chance. Them nectarines—why, I can remember the season afore iver Bill Green set foot in the place, they was one mash o' juiciness. Bustin' they was with ripeness. Seems to me as tho' summat had clean took the flavour out of everythink." Uncle Gough glanced over the newspaper:

"Ay, ay, Stock. I begin to find that out myself. I'm afraid you and I are both suffering from a complaint that is apt to take the flavour out of everything. Old age, Stock, old age. But," he added gently, "it will cure itself, it will cure itself."

"Yes, sure, sir," answered Stock, conveying something like softness into his hard immovable face and monotonous voice, in an indescribable way. "Yes, sure; an' the

cure 'll be a lastin' an' a blessed un. Once we gits through the valley o' the shadow, there'll be joyful meetin's t'other side. An' no more partin's. That's the blessedest, sir, bain't it? No more partin's."

"Margaret," said my uncle suddenly, when the old man had withdrawn, and I was packing the fruit in an open basket, "who are those nectarines for?" I trembled, but I had made this opportunity, and would not let it slip. So I took courage to answer in as steady a voice as I could command: "Dear uncle, I hope you will not be angry. I thought I might have them. They are to send to my sister Anna."

He still held the Gazette before him, so that I could not see his face; but I heard the paper rustle and shake in the dead silence

that ensued. I was very much frightened. At length my uncle rose from his chair and walked slowly towards the door; but before he reached it, he held out his hand, and I ran into his arms. "God bless thee, my bairn!" he said very softly, and I felt a tear drop on my forehead. His hand was on the lock, but he paused in the act of opening the door, and said, without turning or looking at me: "I'm going into the garden, my lass. There's a vast of fruit and flowers almost spoiling there. Take whatever you want, and do as you like with them. You—you need never tell me anything about it."

In this way, I obtained an indirect permission to send many little gifts from the Gable House to my sister, and they were accepted. It was a long time before I could

bring myself to visit her again, but I did so at last, having heard from one of the servants that the child was ailing sadly. After that I constantly went to see her. I always chose those hours for going, when Horace would probably be absent; and during several months I did not see him half a dozen times. Anna's manner to me fluctuated; but though she was often fretful, irritable, and unreasonable, there was no repetition of the outburst to which she gave way on the occasion of our first meeting. Little Lily was fading and pining, and our anxiety and love for the dear child was a common ground of sympathy between us.

I had had several letters from Madame de Beauguet, giving pleasant accounts of herself and her husband. I had kept her in-

formed, as well as I could, of all that had befallen at the Gable House; of my aunt's death, and of Anna's marriage. My letters, as you may suppose, were but dreary exchanges for her bright cheerful epistles. But she wished for them, and was glad to hear all about myself that I could make up my mind to tell her. I know she was glad to get my letters, because she said so. Anna would often ask to have news of the De Beauguets. Their life in Canada, and the kind of people who surrounded them, seemed to have an inexhaustible interest for her. Gradually I discovered that she was eagerly endeavouring to persuade Horace to leave England altogether, and try his fortunes abroad. He was restless and unhappy here, she said. Things were not going well with

him. There, in America, he would have a wide field for his talents, and would work with energy. But I believe there was a secret unacknowledged feeling at the bottom of her heart that he would belong to her, more entirely and exclusively, when once he should be divided from the familiar scenes and friends that still claimed any regard from him at home. Be that as it might, Anna had set her heart upon this scheme, and pursued it with headlong vehemence. How Horace thought of it, I could not tell; he never spoke to me on the subject. And, besides, as I have said, we very, very seldom met. But an unforeseen and painful circumstance unexpectedly occurred to make him think seriously of the project. Old Mr. Lee was in the habit of receiving large sums

of money for the baronet, his employer, and, Sir Robert being seldom at the Hall, had very nearly absolute control of the property. There was no appeal from Mr. Lee's decision for any tenant on the estate. Notwithstanding an arrogant pomposity of manner, and an implicit belief in the infallibility of his own wisdom, he was considered on the whole to deal fairly between landlord and tenant. Even those who most disliked him—I am sorry to say they were rather numerous—had to restrict their animadversions to the offensive "stuck-up-ishness" of his manner. "Our old gander 'minds me always of Mr Lee," said Farmer Gibson once. "When he swims under the stone arch of the bridge on the river, he ducks his head down every time, just as though he was high enough and

strong enough to carry away bridge and all, if he wasn't precious careful. Now, the arch is a good six foot over him, let him crane his neck up as he will; but the silly bird can't see that. It's just the same with the steward. Why, when he comes into our place, he stoops down, so condescending, for fear he should do us a mischief like. Lord, we're a mile above his head all the time! Only, ye see, he don't know it, no more 'n the gander."

Unfortunately, this blind pride was destined to have a fall which crushed other people in its ruins. I dare say my uncle had heard rumours of the impending crash, in Willborough, before it came. Disaster seldom comes unheralded by a warning atmosphere of its own. But I lived so entirely out of even our little world, that the

evil tidings took me quite unprepared. It seems that Mr. Lee, relying solely on his own judgment, and taking no counsel of those whose experience might have guided him, had embarked all he possessed in a ruinous speculation, which burst, leaving him, and many others, nearly penniless. But this was not the worst. The worst was overwhelmingly bad. It was hinted that Mr. Lee had not risked and lost his own, merely. For this error in judgment, perhaps more pity than indignation might have been bestowed on him: though, in truth, the world is generally very angry with people who lose their money, and finds it dreadfully hard to forgive that offence. But it was asserted that a very large sum which Mr. Lee had received for Sir Robert, and

which he should have deposited in the county bank, had been appropriated by him to this other purpose—no doubt with the full intention of replacing it—and was lost with his own property in the general ruin. I first heard the news from Anna, who was half-distracted about it. "He has disgraced us—disgraced Horace. That is the misery. The loss of his own money would have been a serious misfortune, of course. But this is shame and ruin." I cautioned my sister not to speak in that unguarded way until the truth of the matter should be positively ascertained. But she took this in ill part, asking me if I supposed the good name of her husband's father were not as dear to her as to me? Briefly, she was in no mood to be argued with, and I could only hope that

in her excitement she had exaggerated the extent of the evil. But on venturing to speak to my uncle of the matter, I learned, to my dismay, that the worst had been confirmed, and that Mr. Lee would not only be a ruined man, but one with a slur upon his name henceforward. "Uncle, what will they do with Mr. Lee? Can Sir Robert punish him? How will it be?" In my anxiety, I forgot the tacit understanding between us that the name of Lee was never more to be mentioned at the Gable House. Uncle Gough forgot it too, perhaps; for he answered with a troubled face, "My lassie, it is a bad business. I am told his son is making every effort to repay the money belonging to Sir Robert; if he can do so, they say it will be hushed up. As to old Lee's own savings,

they are blown to the four winds of heaven, like the dust of last summer." This was the calamity which made Horace finally resolve to leave England. He sold his share in Rotherwood's business to young Clinch; and the sum thus raised, together with his savings during the past year, sufficed to replace Sir Robert's money. I believe the baronet behaved considerately, and forebore to take legal proceedings, on the assurance from Horace that his property should be restored. But of course Mr. Lee lost the situation he had filled so many years, and in his old age was cast destitute on the world. When all was done, there remained but a slender store wherewith to take Horace and his wife and child to Canada. He resolved on going first to Quebec, in the hope that

De Beauguet—now a prosperous man—might be able to assist him to find employment. It was a sad, sad time. I was with them very much, rendering what assistance I could. Soon after it was settled that they should go, my uncle announced to me one day that he would be absent from Willborough for a week or so.

"I'm going to bide with Norcliffe, Madge," he said. "He has often asked me to go and see him, but I have never had the heart to do it yet. You'll be more at liberty when I am out of the way for a season. I'll be back with you, my darling, on the twentieth."

Horace and my sister were to leave Willborough on the nineteenth. Before my uncle started for Beachington, almost at the last moment he gave me a little packet.

"This," said he, nervously, "is for you, Madge. It is your own, to do as you will with. I put no restriction whatever on the use you are to make of it, but don't let me hear of it any more."

When he was gone, I opened it. It contained a bank note for fifty pounds. The few days preceding my sister's departure were very busy days, and seemed to fly past us.

On the last evening I was left alone with Horace. Anna had quitted us to put her infant to rest, and we sat in the bare dismantled room, surrounded by the discomfort and desolation which attend the preparations for a long journey, while the evening shadows were deepening rapidly into darkness. Then, for the first time, I learned that old Mr. Lee

was to accompany them. "I could not leave my father here, to starve, Margaret," said Horace. "I have no means of providing for him. He must cast in his lot with us. Besides, Willborough scenes and Willborough people are painful to him now. It is best that we should all go and hide our shame and misery together."

"I hope," said I, faltering, "I hope and trust your going may be for the best. There are some here who think that this—this——"

"This disgrace," suggested Horace, bitterly.

"—This misfortune, need not have driven you from England. You, at least, are blameless."

"Am I?" he returned in a tone that sent

a sharp pang to my heart. "Yes, oh yes. I am blameless. Margaret, do you think I could have gone on living this life much longer? It was killing me."

"Horace!"

"Yes, it was killing me and killing her. We can never know happiness again."

"Oh, Horace, do not say so!"

"Never, never again. But at least the daily and hourly torture we both endure in this place may be lessened. I am a wretch to distress you, Margaret," he said rising and going to the window; "a selfish wretch. But the truth is, I am worn out, mind and body, by these last few weeks. I scarcely know what I am doing sometimes."

I saw his hand go wearily up to his head against the dim window-pane.

"I know you are not well," I answered, struggling to regain composure; "I have seen it for some time. The voyage and the change may be of service to you, and to my poor pale Lily. Horace, I have but one other word to say, and I say it with my whole heart—be good to Anna. She loves you; be patient with her; remember she will have but you in all the world now."

"God help her, poor girl!" he answered. "Yes, Margaret, you may trust me to be patient with her. Who should be patient with her, if not I? We must help each other."

When Anna rejoined us, we sat and talked awhile with some poor assumption of cheerfulness. We spoke of our old governess, and of her wedding-day; and I sent many

messages to her and to her husband. Before I left, I went to look at baby, sleeping in her cot, and slipped into her little tender hand a paper containing my uncle's gift. I had written on it, "To Lily, from Aunt Margaret." But, the following day the little servant brought me a letter, left with her for me by my sister. It contained the bank-note and these words: "If my uncle chooses to recognise me as his niece and adopted daughter, I will cheerfully accept his assistance; but I will take nothing in the shape of alms from you. A. L."

Stubborn, self-tormenting spirit! Poor misguided girl!

CHAPTER XIII.

WEEKS and months had gathered into years, since my sister and her husband went away from England. Anna's life was as varied and adventurous, as mine was monotonous and calm. She wrote to me occasionally, but her letters were brief, and far from frequent. I heard more clear and detailed accounts of her life from Madame de Beauguet than from herself, as long as they remained near Quebec. But soon commenced a series of wanderings and changes, which took my sister and her husband farther and farther out of our old friend's

ken. Things did not prosper with them. That much I could discover to my sorrow. Horace had a heavy burden on his shoulders now, and his health was far from good. Poor little Lily did not outlive her first Canadian winter, and Anna gave birth to three more children, who all, save the youngest, died in early infancy. The surviving little one, a boy, was cherished and watched over by his parents with great anxiety. Madame de Beauguet wrote me that it was piteous to see Anna's trembling apprehension lest he too should be taken from them. Old Mr. Lee had sunk into partial imbecility, and needed tending like a child. All these helpless beings had but Horace to lean on for support. My heart bled for them. Sometimes it seemed in-

tolerable to me that I should be surrounded by all the comforts of my home at the Gable House, while they were facing poverty in a foreign land. But I was not allowed the solace of affording them any help. My uncle from time to time gave me sums of money "to do as I liked with;" and, as those sums were invariably forthcoming whenever there was news of difficulty and struggle from Canada, I did not hesitate to send them to my sister. But poverty and misfortune, far from subduing, seemed but to heighten, her haughty spirit. She sent back my offerings with a cold assurance that they were not needed. I could only forward the money to Madame de Beauguet, and beg her, if she saw them in any sore strait, to

offer them assistance as though coming from herself.

Time had been very good to me. I believe I was, in some respects, older than my years. Never very sprightly nor vivacious, the great sorrow of my life had sobered what youthful gaiety I once possessed. But though outwardly, perhaps too staid and quiet for my age, I was not without an inner peace and cheerfulness which seldom deserted me. I suppose the secret of it, was, the knowledge that I was dear and useful to my uncle, and, perhaps, to others. Ah, Lucy, you can never be quite unhappy, so long as there is left to you one human being to whom your affection is precious. Prize well this inestimable privilege of loving. Love, love, my child, abun-

dantly, ungrudgingly; it shall be given to you again, ten thousandfold.

Mr. Norcliffe was a frequent and welcome guest at the Gable House. My uncle found great pleasure and comfort in his society; and to me he was what he had promised to be—a friend, a brother. Once, since his first offer, he had renewed his proposal; but my earnestness on that occasion convinced him that his suit was hopeless, and he made me a voluntary promise never to address me on the subject again. This promise he kept with the most loyal good faith. "I cannot afford to lose your friendship, Margaret," he said; "I may call you Margaret, may I not? I am so many, many years older than you, my child. I could not bear that there should be any

constraint or pain to you in our intercourse, and yet to lose your kind companionship and good-will would be very hard to me. Trust me that henceforward you shall never more be pained by a word or look of mine. I will put all that away—bury it in the Red Sea, if you like. That is the place for laying unquiet spirits, is it not? Mine, at all events, shall disturb you no more." As I have said, he was most loyal to his word. By this time, he had come to be intimately acquainted with our family history, and my uncle had acquired the habit of appealing to his judgment on many points. Although his home was still at Beachington, he was much with us. As my uncle said, the Gable House was large enough for three, and it was a

charity to come and cheer us as often as he could.

The story of one day's life was, as nearly as possible, the story of all the others in its outward details. The circling seasons melted into one another, and made us change, from time to time, the fireside for the garden. But there was no stirring event, no exciting incident, to startle us from the calm round of daily life.

One bright June day, we were sitting out in the hay-field, my uncle, Mr. Norcliffe, and I. A wide elm spread its fresh canopy above our heads, there was a sleepy sweetness in the air, and silence had come down on us softly, with the peaceful shadow of the elm-tree. My uncle, leaning back in his garden chair, had fallen asleep. Mr. Norcliffe lay

on the grass, gazing up into the depths of the foliage above us. All at once he looked at me and said in a low voice: "What did you tell me was the date of your last letter from Canada?"

"The third of April. It is time I should hear again."

"Your letter was from Madame de Beauguet?"

"Yes. It is long since I have had one from Anna. But they are moving about, and at the last accounts were in a wild, half-settled district. It seems very strange to me that Horace should have to be driven so from place to place."

"Ay. A rolling stone, you know——"

"But why should it be? It seems to me very hard."

"Margaret," returned Mr. Norcliffe, after a pause, "it is hard; but it does not surprise me. With all your brother-in-law's talent and goodwill to work, he lacks the mental and physical energy necessary to attain success in such a country as that to which he has gone. He will fight, but hopelessly; and that is not the way to win. When I saw him last, in the streets of Willborough, he looked broken. The heart had gone out of him. I saw it in his gait, in the carriage of his head, in the look of his eyes. Forgive me if I pain you: but you trust me, and I must speak the truth to you."

"I know you will say nothing but what is true and good," I answered; "but I cannot help weeping to think of Anna and the child. It seems too terrible that I cannot

help them. O, if uncle would but hold out a forgiving hand! From him, Anna would take assistance. Could you not speak to him, Mr. Norcliffe?"

"Heaven knows my readiness to do what I can for your sister, Margaret. But do you not see how much more difficult it is now, than it was before, to appeal to Mr. Gough on her behalf? The sums he has given you, he naturally believes to have been applied to her use. If we confess to him that she has obstinately and implacably refused to receive them as coming through your hands will that, think you, soften his heart towards her?"

I was silent.

"However, I will try what I can do. I understand well enough why—though your

influence with your uncle is strong on all other points—your pleadings for your sister do not avail to induce him to forgive her."

"Do you? Why?"

He looked at me curiously for a moment.

"Because it was you whom she most wronged, Margaret."

My uncle awoke from his short sleep, and no more was said between Mr. Norcliffe and me, at that time. But this was the first of many similar conversations between us. He used his influence with my uncle on Anna's behalf, though without inducing him to take any active step towards reconciliation. At length, however, he prevailed so far as to gain from my uncle a half promise that he would reconsider his will. In the first force

of his stern anger against Anna and her husband, he had entirely altered the original distribution of his property, and had left everything absolutely to me, as he had told Mr. Lee. Now, he promised Mr. Norcliffe that he would think of making some provision for Anna's child. To her, or to her husband, he steadily refused to bequeath a farthing.

Thus, the summer and autumn of that year passed away, and I received no letter from Anna. Our old schoolmistress still wrote with the affectionate fidelity that belonged to her. But she could give only meagre tidings of Anna. Two sad facts were plain to her, she said; that they were struggling with poverty; and that Horace's health was fading beneath the sharp breath

of that inclement land. Meanwhile, my uncle spoke to Mr. Norcliffe, from time to time, of altering his will. He would do it. He would think it out clearly. He would set his house in order, before he should be summoned away. He grew quieter and more silent as the year went on, but you could not say more sad. His manner, always kindly, became softer than I had ever known it. Also he would sit for hours, neither reading nor speaking, but gazing out before him with a look that seemed to contemplate something far away.

On Christmas Day we had been to church together. It was bitter cold, and he was chilled and numbed when we came home. I mixed him some hot spiced wine after dinner, as my aunt had used to do, and we sat listen-

ing to the evening bells in the old fire-lighted room.

"Peace—and—good-will," he murmured, softly. "Peace — and — good-will. How plainly the bells say it, Madge!"

As if the words had been put into my mouth and were not my own, I rose and embraced him:

"O, dearest uncle, forgive her, forgive her!"

He put me gently away from him, after a while, and made me no answer. But, when we parted for the night, he kissed and blessed me solemnly, and the last words he spoke to me were these:

"Blessed are the peacemakers.—I will try, Madge; I will try."

The sickly flare of a candle in the faint

grey wintry daybreak was the first thing that met my eyes when I awoke next morning. The face of the woman who held it in her trembling hand, startled me into complete wakefulness at once.

"Hester, what is the matter?"

"Miss Margaret! Master!"

"Is my uncle ill?"

"Oh, Miss Margaret. I'm afraid—"

I cannot remember how I reached his room. I have a confused idea of her huddling a great cloak over my shoulders, and of the chilly feeling of the oaken boards to my bare feet. I had hardly made a step across the threshold of my uncle's chamber, when a strong gentle grasp was laid on my arm, and I heard Dr. Dixon's voice, saying:

"One moment, my dear Miss Sedley. Stay one instant to collect your strength."

"Dr. Dixon, let me go to him. He is ill; he wants me. You must not keep me from him!"

"My dear Miss Sedley, believe me, I would not do so, if your presence could be of use or comfort to him. But—be composed, I beseech of you—he——"

I broke from him and advanced to the bed. My beloved guardian and benefactor! No passionate tone of the voice he had listened to so often, no loving touch of the hand he had held in his generous protecting clasp, could stir him now. Dead, dead!

I was not unsupported in that heavy hour. Our old doctor was kind and friendly, and

Mr. Norcliffe responded with instant promptitude to the hasty summons I sent him. They agreed that some affection of the heart had been the immediate cause of my uncle's death, and that it must have been peaceful and painless. He had passed away in sleep, they believed, for he was lying quite placidly on his undisturbed pillow when they found him in the morning, lifeless and cold. There had been no change made in his will. With the exception of some legacies to the servants, I was left absolute mistress of the property.

"I know," said I to Mr. Norcliffe, "that he meant to make some provision for Anna and her boy. I am thankful to remember now, that his last words to me were words of softening towards Anna."

"I believe as you do, Margaret," said Mr. Norcliffe, "that he so intended. But the alteration has never been made. Whatever portion of your uncle's money goes to Mrs. Lee now, she must receive from your hand."

"I will hold it in trust for her," I answered. And we said no more.

CHAPTER XIV.

"SOME one wants you, please, Miss Margaret."

Hester's thin straight form stood in the doorway, and Hester's thin high voice spoke to me. I was sitting, very dreary and forlorn, in the old morning-room. The fire had died down to a dull red; the sky was leaden and lowering; winter was without the house, and grief within. Only yesterday, they had carried away its master, never to return. The last journey across the home threshold had been made; that journey which we must all make some day, and which leaves

those who remain behind, so desolate. Mr. Norcliffe was staying with Dr. Dixon, and they had both gone home, and left me for the evening. I was sitting solitary and sad, as I have said, by the low fire, with a sensation of utter loneliness, and a yearning void in my heart, when I was roused by Hester's "Some one wants you, please, Miss Margaret."

"Wants me, Hester? Who is it?"

"They asked for master first, please miss," said Hester, putting her apron to her eyes; "and I said as there was—as there was—no one here but you."

A tremor in her usually measured tones roused my attention, deadened and dead though all my senses seemed to be, with much crying.

"Who is it, Hester?"

"O Miss Margaret, would you step into the dining-room, please? I couldn't bring myself to tell her. Will you, please, step into the dining-room?"

I got up and followed her with a confused dizzy feeling, and a strange doubt, of my own identity, if I may so express the sensation which I have experienced once or twice on occasions of strong emotion. The dining-parlour was without even the dull fire which burned in the morning-room. Its air struck cold and damp. Some leafless boughs in the garden, bedropped with sleet, tapped like elfin fingers on the window-pane. A woman dressed in the deepest mourning, was sitting in the arm-chair—my uncle's chair—at the end of the room. She rose on

my entrance. "I want to see my uncle," she said.

"Anna!"

She put out one hand to hold me off, as I rushed towards her, and then I saw that she held a little sleeping child, wrapped in her shawl. "I want to see my uncle. Do you mean to keep me from him?"

"O Anna, Anna, for your own sake do not speak so harshly. My poor girl, my poor love, too late, too late!"

She staggered, and Hester, who had come with me into the room, made a step forward, as if to relieve her of the child. But she clasped him tighter, and leaned on the chair behind her for support.

"Too late! What do you mean?" I

could barely hear the words, her voice was so low and faint.

"Anna, he is dead. He was buried yesterday."

She sank down into the great chair, and the little child rolled from her arm, as its grasp relaxed, on to her knee; but Hester took him and laid him, still half asleep, upon the sofa, while I busied myself with my sister. She had swooned. I called the other women-servants, and by degrees we revived her, and half carried, half supported her to my own chamber, where we undressed her and laid her on the bed. She resigned herself to our hands, but uttered no word, and her wan face was motionless and rigid. After a time, I sent the others away, and sat by her side, silently watching. A dim

light from the shaded lamp fell on her face, and, as I looked at it, it seemed as if the years had been rolled back like a curtain, and I lived over again that moonlight night, when in that very room I had told Anna of my love. Poor changed pale face! Drawn, and haggard, and aged, how altered from the lovely girlish countenance which had lain on the pillow, blooming out of its nest of soft dark curls!

I glanced at the black dress that lay beside the bed, and I read in it all the history of her return.

As I sat gazing on my sister's face, the large dark eyes opened, and looked at me.

"I have been very ill, Margaret; at death's door. That is why I am so weak. O, I have suffered much, in mind and body!"

She followed my glance towards the black gown, which lay by the bed. "Yes," she said slowly, in a faint hoarse voice, "I have lost him. I have come home desolate, with my fatherless boy. If it were not for the child, I would pray that this hour might be my last. You think I speak calmly, while you are weeping. How I envy you those tears! Mine are all spent, I think."

She closed her eyes again, and lay silent for a long time. Then her lips moved, and I heard her whisper:

"Margaret, bend down your face to me."

I leaned over her, and touched her cheek with mine. I believe the same recollection rushed into her mind that had been in my own, for, suddenly, she threw her arms around my neck, burying her face upon my

breast, and burst into a flood of hysterical tears. I let her weep, holding her in my arms, and speaking no word, until the fit had exhausted itself. The tears eased her heart, and at last she lay, weak but tranquil, holding my hand in hers. Far, far, into the night, I sat beside her bed, and listened to the broken story she told at intervals.

"No! Let me speak," she said, when, in consideration of her bodily weakness, I would have urged her to try to sleep: "I cannot rest until I have told you all my misery. You know that we were poor, but you cannot imagine how poor we were. Failure met us at every turn. Horace struggled and suffered bravely, but I know now, and I knew then, that he felt it was all in vain. As long as we remained near

Madame de Beauguet and her good husband, things were not so bad. They helped us in a hundred nameless ways. When my poor little Lily lay sick, Margaret, I could not have procured the necessary help for her, if it had not been for our old governess. I know," she added, hastily, "I know what your face says. But I could not take the money from you then. My heart was hardened against you, Margaret, because I knew how much better you were than I, and because I knew that it must be so with him. Every kind act of affection coming from you, stung me; for I thought, in my jealous heart, Horace will love her the better for this."

"Oh, my sister!"

"Yes, I did. It is the bitter truth. I was poor, ailing, worn. I rose early, and

went to rest late, labouring feverishly to help in the daily struggle, with all my feeble strength. I tended the old man—my husband's father—till his death. I saw my little children, born in sorrow and poverty, fade, and languish, and die. But my wicked, proud spirit was not softened yet."

A spark of the old fire blazed in her eyes as she spoke.

"I could have endured it all and more, without flinching, if he had only been spared to me. But I would not bend, so I was broken—ground into dust by the only blow that could utterly overcome me. Horace, weak in body and weary in spirit, fell into a fever. We were in a wild, almost barbarous, place, helpless, penniless. Then, Margaret, when he was struck down in his youth, and

lay on a sick bed, then I was humbled and afraid. I would have gone on my knees before you, to get him the least one of the comforts he needed. We were hundreds of miles away from the only friends who cared for us on all that vast continent. I wrote to Madame de Beauguet distractedly, imploring her to send me help. The good creature came to me herself."

"God bless her!"

"Amen! God bless her! Yes; she made that long dreadful journey alone, travelling day and night to reach us. Horace brightened when he saw her, but it was the last flicker of life. He would often have our boy, our only surviving child, lifted on to his bed, and he would lie holding the tiny hand in his, and gazing on the wistful face. The little fellow,

barely two years old, would sit mute and still, nestling by his father for hours. If we attempted to take him away, he struggled and sobbed until none of us had the heart to remove him. Many times we have waited until he dropped asleep, to carry him to his own little crib. One night I had fallen into an uneasy slumber from exhaustion, and I lay stretched on the floor at the foot of my husband's bed, when, in the dead silence of the night, I was awakened by hearing your name uttered in a loud clear voice. I started to my feet, and saw Horace gazing intently in the direction of the door. 'You are come,' he said with a smile; 'I knew you would come!' Margaret, before the avenging God, I believe that the anguish I endured at that moment might expiate even the great wrong

I did you. 'My own love, my Horace!' I cried frantically, clasping his poor thin hand, 'don't you know me? Speak to me, my husband, or my heart will break.' His gaze never wavered from the door, but he pressed my hand with a feeble clasp, and softly whispered, 'Look at Margaret!'—and so he died.

"Well! Grief does not kill, for I am here. I lay for six weeks, raving in brain fever, and insensible to everything around me. Our good friend nursed me, and took care of my boy, and fed us, and clothed us, and, when I could be moved, carried us both to her own home near Quebec. And then she urged me to return, and cast myself at uncle's feet, and supplicate for pardon and reconciliation. She spoke firmly and openly to me. She probed my heart, and fearlessly

showed me what a wretch I had been, even when I had most gloried in my strength. She told me that it was a duty I owed to my dead Horace, to confide his boy to the loving care of those who could provide for him. Her counsel prevailed over the last remnant of perverse pride in my broken heart, and I came. If I could but have seen my uncle—if he could but have known how I longed for his pardon and his love, even when I was hardest and worst!—but that consolation was not for me. It is just."

"Anna, he loved and forgave you at the last. I know that he dearly loved and fully forgave you. Had he not been taken away so suddenly, he would have shown you by his will, that——"

She laid her hand upon my lips.

"It is better so. I know that my boy and I must owe everything to your generous hand, and I will take your gift from you as though it came from Heaven. I am not what I was. I have been taught in a hard, hard school. It is better so, Margaret, better so."

I have little to add, Lucy. By slow degrees Anna recovered some measure of strength; but she was never more the bright blooming creature she had been once. While she lived, she shared my home, and daily, hourly, made some new return towards the old fondness which had united us as children. The haughty spirit sometimes rose, the wayward temper occasionally broke forth, but never again was there any serious

breach between us. Her boy, little Sedley—your father, Lucy—grew and thrived, and was the joy and sunshine of our quiet home. Stock, bedridden and very near the close of his long life, permitted Anna's boy to climb upon a chair to the tall old-fashioned chimney-piece in his room, and to reach down and fill for him his cherished pipe. Such a concession Stock never made before. Many and many a long churchwarden was smashed by falling from the inexpert little fingers; but Stock resented any attempt to interfere with him.

"Let un be," he would growl out to Hester, who had constituted herself chief nursemaid, and was a little jealous of her authority. "Women folks knows nought about boys."

"Children should be obedient, Mr. Stock," Hester would retort, sharply.

"Ah! and so should women. Let un be. He'll be all right, I tell ye. He's got more sense in his little curly poll nor some as is more'n twenty times his age. Lord, it's a marvel to see the wisdom o' that child!"

Nor did any number of mishaps, in the filling of a long series of pipes, shake Stock one jot in his conviction that if the "women-folks" would only leave Master Sedley alone, he would infallibly come out triumphant from any possible trial of his skill and wisdom. The child took greatly to Aunt Margaret. Sometimes when he came frolicking up to me in his gleeful way, his merry laughter and bright arch glance would make me sad for a season. For it was as if his

father's spirit were looking out of his blue-grey eyes. But little Sedley, though he inherited Horace's sweet temper and buoyant disposition, was made of sterner stuff than his father. He had what poor uncle Gough used to say Horace wanted—ballast.

You have heard of Mr. Norcliffe from your father. He took my nephew as his pupil, and helped to make him the clever doctor he is; and the pretty house, where you and your brothers and sisters were born, once belonged to him. After my sister's death, I gave up the Gable House, and came to be near Sedley Lee and his young wife. When children gathered round them, and their pleasant house was filled with the sound of fresh young voices, I begged to have you, my godchild, to be

as a daughter to me. Your good parents trusted me with their treasure, and their treasure is very dear and precious to my heart.

Anna died with her head upon my breast, and my hand in hers. My name was the last word upon her lips, as it had been on the lips of him whom we both had loved so well.

From my chamber window that looks on the sea, I sit and watch the restless striving waves, that rise and fall, and fall and rise again. With very different eyes do I look upon them now, from those of that poor love-lorn girl who saw them through her tears near fifty years ago. The waves toss and leap wildly; but the heart that once beat more wildly than they, is at peace. I

look out at the sunset, and think with a thankful spirit that my life is setting, serene and bright, even as the daylight dies brightly in the west. I await the summons to depart, not impatiently—for life has many sweet moments for me—but with hope. The remembrances of my early life, its scenes, persons, and incidents, become, not less but more clear to me as I grow old. And sometimes it is with me, as the German poet has said: "The present and near seem afar off, and that which has disappeared becomes the only reality."

THE END.

LONDON: W. H. SMITH AND SON, PRINTERS, 186, STRAND.
16—4—80 D—80

THE SELECT LIBRARY 2/- VOLS.

WHYTE-MELVILLE'S WORKS

Crown 8vo, fancy boards, 2s. each, or 2s. 6d. in cloth.

UNCLE JOHN.
THE WHITE ROSE.
CERISE.
BROOKES OF BRIDLEMERE.
"BONES AND I."
"M. or N."
CONTRABAND.
MARKET HARBOROUGH.
SARCHEDON.
SONGS AND VERSES.
SATANELLA.
THE TRUE CROSS.
KATERFELTO.
SISTER LOUISE.
ROSINE.
TILBURY NO-GO.
RIDING RECOLLECTIONS.
ROY'S WIFE.
BLACK BUT COMELY.

London: CHAPMAN & HALL (LIMITED), 193 Piccadilly.

W. H. SMITH & SON'S
REDUCED ORDNANCE MAPS,

Etc., etc., of the Principal Districts of England and Wales,
FOR TRAVELLERS AND TOURISTS.

"These splendid Maps, unquestionably the most perfect ever published, have been compiled from the Ordnance and Admiralty Surveys, with railways up to the latest date. Their particulars are most minute and accurate ; every possible information that a Map can give is afforded."—*Liverpool Albion.*

Price ONE SHILLING each, full coloured, cloth case. Scale, 4 Miles to an inch.

London and Environs, showing Windsor, Guildford, Maidstone, Southend, etc.
Do. Plan of, 1*s.* on paper
Do. 2*s.* on linen
Do. 5*s.* on roller, varnished
London, Environs of. Scale one inch to a mile.
Do. on linen, 2*s.*
London and Environs Railway Station Map
Manchester, showing Buxton, Macclesfield, Bolton, Blackburn, Southport, etc.
Do. Plan of the City.
Middlesex County and Environs.
Newcastle, showing Durham, Sunderland, Hartlepool, Hexham, Morpeth, etc.
Northumberland, County [of.
Newport, Monmouth, etc., showing Lower Wye, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydvil, etc.
Norwich and Environs, showing Yarmouth, Lowestoft, etc.
Nottingham, showing Derby, Lincoln, Leicester, etc.
Oxford and Environs, showing Reading, Buckingham, Banbury, etc.
Peterborough, showing Huntingdon, Grantham, Melton-Mowbray, etc.
Plymouth and Environs, showing Dartmoor, Cornwall, etc.
Plymouth, Plan of Town
Preston and Environs, showing Lancaster, Wigan, Rochdale, Blackpool, etc.
Rugby and Environs, showing Leamington, Warwick, Coventry, Stratford-on-Avon.
Salisbury, Isle of Wight, Southampton, Portsmouth, Dorchester, etc.
Scarborough and Yorkshire Coast, showing York, Malton, Thirsk, Whitby, etc.
Scotland, Tourist's Map, on linen, 2*s.*
Shrewsbury and Environs, showing Welshpool, Montgomery, Stafford.
Somersetshire, showing the River Severn, etc.
Thames (The River.)
Tunbridge and Environs, showing Rochester, Maidstone, Lewes, etc.
Wales, North, showing Anglesea, Carnarvon, Denbigh, Merioneth.
Do. Central, showing Dolgelly, Aberystwith, Montgomery, etc.
Do. South-West, showing Carmarthen, Pembroke, Cardigan.
Do. South-East, showing Monmouth, Brecnock, Glamorgan.
Yorkshire, County Map.

London: W. H. SMITH & SON, 186 Strand, and at the Railway Bookstalls.

The Select Library of Fiction

TWO SHILLINGS.

By CHARLES LEVER.

That Boy of Norcott's
Jack Hinton
The O'Donoghue
A Rent in a Cloud
Maurice Tiernay
Luttrell of Arran
A Day's Ride
Harry Lorrequer
The Fortunes of Glencore
One of Them
Tony Butler
Barrington
Cornelius O'Dowd
Sir Jasper Carew

By CHARLES LEVER. (2*s.* 6*d.*)

Tom Burke of "Ours"
Charles O'Malley
Knight of Gwynne
Dodd Family Abroad
The Bramleighs of Bishop's Folly
The Daltons
Martins of Cro' Martin
Lord Kilgobbin
Roland Cashel
Sir Brook Fossbrooke
Davenport Dunn

By ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

Lotta Schmidt
The Macdermots
Castle Richmond
The Kellys
The Belton Estate
Doctor Thorne
An Editor's Tales
Tales of All Countries
Rachel Ray
Miss Mackenzie
Lady Anna
La Vendee

By ANTHONY TROLLOPE. (2*s.* 6*d.*)

Can You Forgive Her?
Orley Farm
Ralph the Heir
He Knew He was Right
Phineas Finn
The Bertrams
Eustace Diamonds
Phineas Redux
The Vicar of Bullhampton
THE DUKE'S CHILDREN

London: CHAPMAN & HALL (LIMITED), 193, Piccadilly.

POCKET EDITION.

STANDARD AUTHORS.

PRICE ONE SHILLING,

BOUND IN CLOTH.

1 Harry Lorrequer - - - By Charles Lever
2 Jack Brag - - - By Theodore Hook
3 Rival Houses, etc.- - - By G. P. R. James
4 Tuggs' at Ramsgate, etc. By Charles Dickens, etc.
5 Killed by Mistake - By Edward Mayhew
6 Man with the Plums - By Douglas Jerrold
7 Tragedy of Life - - By John H. Bruton
8 Marine Residence - - - By James Payn
9 Paul Goslett's Confession - By Charles Lever
10 Two Hundred Pounds Reward By James Payn
11 Counterparts By Author of "Charles Auchester"
12 Who Breaks Pays By Author of "Cousin Stella"
13 My First Season By Author of "Counterparts"
14 Confidences - - - - By Hamilton Aïdè
15 Winifred's Wooing - By Georgiana M. Craik
16 Cruelest Wrong of All By Author of "Margaret"

As these Works have been before the public at high prices, it is unnecessary to go into criticism of their merits. But we gladly recommend to the favourable notice of our readers the excellent series of "Standard Authors," which are precisely the kind of book to put in one's pocket when lounging away a summer holiday by the seaside or elsewhere.

LONDON: CHAPMAN AND HALL.

The Select Library of Fiction

POPULAR VOLUMES.

2s. in Picture Boards.

BY THE MOST POPULAR AUTHORS OF THE DAY.

"Capital Novels, well worth double the price asked for them."

Chips from an Old Block — Author of "Flying Scud"
Carr of Carrlyon — Hamilton Aïde
Head of the Family — Mrs. Craik
Olive: a Novel — Mrs. Craik
One of Them — Charles Lever
Sir Jasper Carew — C. Lever
Elsie Venner — O. W. Holmes
Charlie Thornhill — C. C. Clarke
Doctor Thorne — A. Trollope
Macdermots — A. Trollope
Found Dead — James Payn
Hunchback — Victor Hugo
Point of Honour — Author of "Archie Lovell"
Under the Spell — F. W. Robinson
The Bertrams — A. Trollope
Theo Leigh — Annie Thomas
Forlorn Hope — Edmund Yates
Ned Locksley — T. Cheamside
Carry's Confession — Author of "Mattie"
Christie's Faith — „
Called to Account — A. Thomas
Never Forgotten — P. Fitzgerald
Clyffards of Clyffe — J. Payn
Uncle Silas — J. S. Lefanu
Bar Sinister — C. A. Collins
Secret Dispatch — James Grant
Rent in a Cloud — Charles Lever
Geoffry Hamlyn — H. Kingsley
Woman's Devotion — Author of "Margaret and Her Bridesmaids"
Castaway — Edmund Yates
Tony Butler — Charles Lever
Cornelius O'Dowd — C. Lever
La Vendee — Anthony Trollope
Lady Anna — Anthony Trollope
Pique — Author of "Agatha Beaufort"
Off the Line — Lady C. Thynne
Beautiful Edith — Author of "Ursula's Love Story"
Entanglements — Author of "Caste"
Three Wives — Author of "Queen of the County"
Book of Heroines — Author of "Ladies of Lovel Leigh"
Fair Women — Mrs. Forrester
Monsieur Maurice — Miss Amelia B. Edwards
Ursula's Love Story — Author of "Sun and Shade"
Narrow Escape — A. Thomas
Two Kisses — Hawley Smart
Squire of Beechwood — "Scrutator"
Checkmate — J. S. Lefanu
Blotted Out — Annie Thomas
Paul Ferroll — Author of "Why Paul Ferroll Killed His Wife"
Three Chances — Author of "The Fair Carew"
Gardenhurst — Anna C. Steele
Sir Harry Hotspur — A. Trollope
Chetwynd Calverley — W. Harrison Ainsworth
Constable de Bourbon — W. H. Ainsworth
Nuts and Nutcrackers — Charles Lever
Queen of Herself — Alice King
Hilary St. Ives — W. H. Ainsworth
Lucy Crofton — Mrs. Oliphant
Doctor Austin's Guests — W. Gilbert
Gertrude — Mrs. Trollope
Tilbury Nogo — Whyte Melville
Uncle John — Whyte Melville
"Bones and I" — Whyte Melville
Roy's Wife — Whyte Melville
Black but Comely — W. Melville
Like Father Like Son — J. Payn
Not Wooed but Won — J. Payn
Gwendoline's Harvest — „
Cousin Henry — A. Trollope
Riding Recollections — Whyte Melville
High Stakes — Annie Thomas
Blithedale Romance — N. Hawthorne

London: CHAPMAN & HALL (LIMITED), 193 Piccadilly.

The Select Library of Fiction

The best, cheapest, and most POPULAR WORKS published, well printed in clear readable type, on good paper, and strongly bound.

Containing the writings of the most popular Authors of the day.

"Of the many cheap editions and reprints of works of fiction, there is none which better deserve the extensive support which they receive at the hands of the public than the series in course of issue under the title of the "Select Library of Fiction." The volumes published in this form include the whole of the works by Charles Lever, four by the Author of "John Halifax;" and also by—

Anthony Trollope	Author of "Guy Livingstone"	W. H. Ainsworth
Henry Kingsley	Author of "Charley Nugent"	Victor Hugo
Mrs. Trollope	Author of "Caste"	Samuel Lover
Captain Armstrong	J. S. Le Fanu	O. W. Holmes
Charles Lever	Annie Thomas	Amelia B. Edwards
Mrs. Grey	James Payn	Hawley Smart
Miss Anna H. Drury	James Grant	Miss Grant
"Scrutator"	Edmund Yates	Alice King
Mrs. Oliphant	Mrs. Edwardes	Anna C. Steele
Whyte Melville	Mrs. Forrester	Mrs. Marsh
Author of "John Halifax"	Miss Betham Edwards	William Gilbert
Thomas A. Trollope		F. W. Robinson
Eleanor F. Trollope		Charles Clarke
		Theodore Hook

And many others well known to readers of works of fiction. In addition to the literary merits which the works possess in themselves, they present to the reader the important advantage of being printed in clear and excellent type on good paper, differing in this respect very materially from some of the cheaper reprints, which fall to pieces in the process of reading, and which so sorely try the eyesight, especially of those who are accustomed to read in railway carriages."—*Observer.*

PRICE 2s. and 2s. 6d.

London: CHAPMAN & HALL (LIMITED), 193, Piccadilly.

SOLD BY GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS; WARD, LOCK, & Co.; WARNE & Co.

Edinburgh: JOHN MENZIES. Dublin: W. H. SMITH & SON.

AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

THE

LIBRARY READING COVERS

Made in Strong Leather Backs, with Cloth Sides,

Reading and Protecting

COVERS FOR NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES, REVIEWS, ETC.

ABC Guide, 1s.
Academy, 2s.
All the Year Round, 1s.9d.
Argosy, 1s. 6d.
Army & Navy Gaz, 2s.6d.
Army List, 1s. 6d.
Art Journal, 2s. 6d.
Athenæum, 2s.
Belgravia, 1s. 6d.
Blackwood's Mag., 1s.6d.
Bradshaw's 1s.
Builder, 2s. 6d.
Building News, 2s. 6d.
Chambers' Journal, 1s.9d.
Contemporary, 1s. 9d.
Cornhill Magazine, 1s.6d.
Court Journal, 2s. 6d.
Edinburgh Review, 1s.6d.
Engineer, 2s. 6d.
Engineering, 2s. 6d.
Exchange & Mart, 2s.6d.
Family Herald, 2s.
Family Treasury, 1s. 6d.
*Field, 3s.
Fortnightly Rev., 1s.9d.
Fraser's Mag., 1s. 9d.
*Fun, 2s.
Funny Folks, 3s.
Gardening, 2s. 6d.
Gentleman's Mag., 1s.6d.
Good Words, 1s. 9d.
*Graphic, 2s. 6d.
Guardian, 3s.
*Illus. London News, 2s. 6d.
*Illus. Sporting, 2s. 6d.
*Judy, 2s.
Leisure Hour, 2s.
London Journal, 2s.
London Society, 1s. 6d.
Macmillan's Mag., 1s.6d.
Men of Mark, 2s.
Money Market Review, 1s. 6d.
Nature, 2s.
Naval & Military Gaz., 3s.
Nineteenth Centy., 1s.9d.
Notes & Queries, 1s. 9d.
Pall Mall Gazette, 2s. 6d.
Public Opinion, 2s. 6d.
*Punch, 2s.
Quarterly Review, 1s.6d.
Queen, 3s.
Saturday Review, 2s.6d.
Spectator, 2s. 6d.
Sporting Gazette, 2s.6d.
St. James' Gaz., 2s. 6d.
Sylvia's Journal, 2s.
Sunday Magazine, 1s.9d.
Sunday at Home, 2s.
Temple Bar, 1s. 6d.
Times Wkly. Edition, 3s.
Truth, 2s. 6d.
United Service Gaz., 3s.
Vanity Fair, 2s. 6d.
Whitehall, 2s. 6d.
World, The, 2s. 6d.
Young Ladies Jrnl., 2s.

* Only these Cases are Lettered with Titles. Others will cost 3d. extra.
Cases made to any size.

W. H. SMITH & SON, 186 Strand.

Orders received at all Railway Bookstalls.

WORKS BY THE AUTHOR OF

"JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

Price 3s. per Vol. in Cloth binding, or 2s. in Picture Boards.

TWO MARRIAGES.

Fifth Edition.

"In these days of sensation novels it is refreshing to take up a work of fiction, which, instead of resting its claims to attention on the number and magnitude of the crimes detailed in its pages, relies for success on those more legitimate grounds of attraction which, in competent hands, have raised this class of literature to a deservedly high position."

AGATHA'S HUSBAND.

Thirteenth Edition.

"One of Miss Muloch's admired fictions, marked by pleasant contrasts of light and shade—scenes of stirring interest and pathetic incidents. The theme is one of touching interest, and is most delicately managed."—*Literary Circular.*

OLIVE.

Thirteenth Edition.

"It is a common cant of criticism to call every historical novel the 'best that has been produced since Scott,' and to bring 'Jane Eyre' on the *tapis* whenever a woman's novel happens to be in question. In despite thereof we will say that no novel published since 'Jane Eyre' has taken such a hold of us as this 'Olive,' though it does not equal that story in originality and in intensity of interest. It is written with eloquence and power."—*Review.*

HEAD OF THE FAMILY.

Thirteenth Edition.

"We have arrived at the last and by far the most remarkable of our list of novels—'The Head of the Family,' a work which is worthy of the author of 'The Ogilvies,' and, indeed, in most respects, a great advance on that. It is altogether a very remarkable and powerful book, with all the elements necessary for a great and lasting popularity. Scenes of domestic happiness, gentle and tender pathos, abound throughout it, and are, perhaps, the best and highest portions of the tale."—*Guardian.*

THE OGILVIES.

Twelfth Edition.

"The book is charming. It is written with deep earnestness and pervaded by a noble and loving philosophy; while, in giving form to her conceptions, the writer evinces at once a fine and subtle imagination, and that perception of minute characteristics which gives to fiction the life-like truth of biography. Nor does she want the power to relieve her more serious view by one of genial and well-directed humour."—*Athenæum.*

London: CHAPMAN & HALL (Limited), 193, Piccadilly.

A Rent in a Cloud and St. Patrick's Eve;

Or, Three Eras in the Life of an Irish Peasant.

By Charles Lever,

Author of "Charles O'Malley," etc.

"Full of beauty and truth, and will probably be even more popular than anything that Mr. Lever has yet given to the world."—*Tait's Magazine.*

"One of the best and purest productions of this fertile author. The tale is touched throughout with genuine pathos, and exhibits glimpses of beauty, moral and intellectual, gleaming over the rugged lot of the Irish labourer, like the pure specks of blue in a stormy sky, when occasionally the clouds sever."—*Brittania.* (193)

Head of the Family.

By the Author of "John Halifax."

"We have arrived at the last and by far the most remarkable of our list of novels, 'The Head of the Family,' a work which is worthy of the author of 'The Ogilvies,' and, indeed, in most respects, a great advance on that. It is altogether a very remarkable and powerful book, with all the elements necessary for a great and lasting popularity. Scenes of domestic happiness, gentle and tender pathos, abound throughout it, and are, perhaps, the best and highest portions of the tale."—*Guardian.* (2)

Slaves of the Ring. By F. W. Robinson.

"A very good story. The reader cannot but feel interested in the loves, the joys, and sorrows of 'The Slaves of the Ring.' It is no small praise to say that the present tale possesses in almost every respect the good qualities of the author's previous works."—*Observer.* (106)

Pearl.

By the Author of "Caste," "Mr. Arle," "Col. Dacre," etc. etc.

"This is the best book that the author has written. 'Pearl' is a refined and charming story. The incidents and characters are managed with delicate subtlety, and there is a careful finish about each character which raises the story into a work of art. 'Pearl' is exquisitely drawn. She is worthy of her name."—*Athenæum.*

"This novel is a very interesting one. The characters are well portrayed, and there is an indescribable charm about the heroine."—*Observer.* (287)

Tilbury Nogo. By Whyte Melville.

"A capital novel, of the 'Charles O'Malley' school, full of dashing adventure, with scenes of real history cleverly introduced in the narrative." (80)

Charles Auchester.

DEDICATED TO THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD.

"Music has never had so glowing an advocate as the author of these volumes. There is an amazing deal of ability displayed in them."—*Herald.*

"The life of an enthusiast in music, by himself. The work is full of talent. The sketches of the masters and artists are life-like. In Seraphael all will recognise Mendelssohn, and in Miss Benette, Miss Lawrence, and Anastase Berlioz, Jenny Lind, and another well-known to artist life will be easily detected. To every one who cares for music, the volumes will prove a delightful study."—*Britannia.* (41)

The House on the Moor.

By Mrs. Oliphant,
Author of "May," "Harry Muir."

"This story is very interesting, and the interest deepens as the story proceeds."—*Athenæum.* (334)

Harry Lorrequer. By Charles Lever.

"Who needs introducing to Charles Lever, the most rollicking, jovial, as he is the most truthful and natural of Irish novelists? This new and very cheap edition of 'Harry Lorrequer' will revive the pleasure that waited upon its first perusal many years ago. Mr. Lever's fame as a novelist is certainly based upon his wonderful power of invention, his audacious fun, his unexaggerated treatment of passion and sentiment, and the unrivalled genuineness of his Irish characters. This work deserves a cosy place on the shelves of those who do not already possess the dearer and less handy editions."—*Derby Reporter.* (22)

Barrington. By Charles Lever.

"This is a new and cheap edition in one volume of one of Mr. Charles Lever's recent novels, and one which, considering its general merits, holds a very respectable position amongst the varied works of that author. There is certainly nothing very remarkable in the plot of the story, or the manner of its execution, but it maintains its interest throughout, and presents one or two characters which may claim the merit (for it is merit now-a-days) of decided originality. The book is well worth reading, and in its present form will no doubt find many admirers."—*Hamtshire Telegraph.* (75)

One and Twenty. By F. W. Robinson,

Author of "Milly's Hero," etc.

"This remarkable novel is every way worthy of notice, whether as regards the verisimilitude of the story, or the simple and unaffected, yet exceedingly graphic style with which it is written. It reads more like a spirited memoir than a mere creation of the author's brain."

"It is a long time since we have met with so original a tale, or one so true to nature—true in the lessons which it teaches, as well as in the pictures which it draws."—*John Bull.* (111)

The Hillyars and the Burtons.

By Henry Kingsley.

Ninth Edition.

"Is an uncommonly amusing and interesting book, because of the author's own nature, which is infused into every page, and because of the brilliant bits of writing about Australia and its colonists. These last flash out like gems from the rest of the narrative."—*Globe.* (197)

Austin Elliot. By Henry Kingsley.

Seventh Edition.

"A book which it is impossible not to like—and that not simply for its literary excellence, the construction of its plot, the beauty of its style, but still more for the earnestness of purpose, the genial spirit, and the manly tone by which it is characterised."—*Nonconformist.*

"This novel fulfils the first purpose of novels, it interests and amuses."—*Saturday Review.* (200)

Silcote of Silcotes. By Henry Kingsley.

Sixth Edition.

"Every scene in the book is described with great freshness and realistic power. We will freely confess that the book is a delightful one to read, and that there is not a line of dull writing in it from beginning to end."—*Pall Mall Gazette.* (198)

Never Forgotten. By Percy Fitzgerald.

"In 'Never Forgotten' he has elaborated a picture which has many merits, and in which the most prominent figure deserves very high praise. The character of Captain Fermor is an original creation, and deserves to be studied. . . . Mr. Fitzgerald's hero bears no great resemblance to Mr. Trollope's Crosbie. . . . Crosbie is a commonplace man of society. But Fermor's is an exceptional character: his figure stands out in prominent relief from the crowd of walking gentlemen of fiction." (137)

The O'Donoghue. By Charles Lever.

"The introduction of this beautiful and brilliant work into the Select Library is a healthy sign of the times, and speaks well for the sagacity and judgment of the eminent publishers. 'The O'Donoghue' is a tale of Ireland fifty years ago, and is told with a charm of manner which, more than any other writer of the day, distinguishes Charles Lever. It certainly possesses all the elements of a good novel, combining graphic and life-like portraiture of persons, exquisite descriptions of scenery, vigorous and well-sustained narrative, a plot intensely interesting, and wonderful constructive power throughout. It is indeed an admirable work, and we welcome it as one of the best that has hitherto appeared from the master hand of Lever."—*Shrewsbury Journal.* (27)

Miss Mackenzie. By Anthony Trollope.

"It is the union of fertility, readableness, and consummate cleverness, which makes us in gaping wonderment abound when we take up 'Miss Mackenzie.' On careful perusal we find it excellent; in Mr. Trollope's quietest tone of humour."—*Globe.* (122)

Ravenshoe. By Henry Kingsley.

Twelfth Edition.

"There is an immense body of vitality in this book—humour, imagination, observation in the greatest wealth, and that delightful kind of satire which springs from a warm heart, well reined in by a keen intellect."—*Spectator.* (196)

The Clyffards of Clyffe.

By the Author of "Lost Sir Massingberd," etc.

"The interest of this story is well sustained to the last."—*Reader.*

"The author displays imaginative faculties of a higher order than in his previous works. Throughout the whole book there is a pervading sense of power and finish."—*Post.*

"A charming book. From incident to incident the reader is led in pleasant surprise and ever-growing interest."—*Star.* (138)

Elsie Venner. A Romance of Destiny.

By Oliver Wendell Holmes,

Author of "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table."

"We recommend all who are in search of a fascinating novel to read this work for themselves. They will find it well worth their while. There is a freshness and originality about it quite charming, and there is a certain nobleness in the treatment, both of sentiment and incident, which is not often found." (66)

ANTHONY TROLLOPE'S WORKS.

Price 6s., crown 8vo, cloth.

A NEW EDITION, ABRIDGED FROM THE FOURTH LIBRARY EDITION.

SOUTH AFRICA.

By ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

"The world ought to be very much obliged to Mr. Trollope. South Africa is a country which, even after his lively description, few would care to see, though we are all of us glad to read about it. With these volumes in our hand we can learn all that we can care to know without the inconvenience of a long sea voyage; free, too, from the peril of being swamped and drowned in landing at East London, Durban, or any other of the bar harbours of the colony; and with our bones undislocated after long and tedious land journeys in mail-carts or bullock wains; and, though last, not least, not compelled at the end of the day's journey either to share a bed with a fellow-traveller or to lie on the bare ground in some Boer's dirty abode. A traveller who can brave all these discomforts, who can dash through a country snapping up all that is worth seeing as he passes through each province, and then rush back, writing his last chapter in the Bay of Biscay, and publishing his two volumes within a month of his return, and those not heavy and solemn and priggish, but very light and amusing, deserves well of his readers, and cannot fail to be rewarded by their approbation. If, however, it had not been for the Transvaal Republic and its bold annexation last summer by Lord Carnarvon, we should not have now been reading our 'South Africa.'"—*The Times.*

NOW READY.—A CHEAPER EDITION OF

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.

In TWO Volumes, crown 8vo, cloth, price 7s. 6d.

Mr. ANTHONY TROLLOPE's highly entertaining and useful Work on the Rise, Progress, Resources, and Government of the Colonies, is also issued in a cheap form:—

SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND WEST AUSTRALIA.
NEW SOUTH WALES AND QUEENSLAND.
VICTORIA AND TASMANIA.
NEW ZEALAND.

"Mr. Trollope has written the best account of the Australian colonies yet published. No other equals it in literary power and skill; no other is such pleasant and easy reading, or so full of the very information which English readers need, or so fair and true and free from crudeness in its opinions and speculation. . . . . The chapters on Australian society are just and excellent; and though it might be possible for us to disagree from Mr. Trollope in one or two small matters of fact or points of political speculation, the difference would be really so trifling that we prefer to find no fault at all, but to repeat—and the writer is able to speak from long experience of the Australian colonies, and from perusal of many books which have been written on them—that these volumes supersede a whole mass of dull and indifferent literature, and in spite of their repetitions, are the most agreeable, just, and acute works extant upon their subject."—*The Times.*

LONDON: CHAPMAN & HALL, 193 PICCADILLY.

SELECT LIBRARY EDITION OF

HENRY KINGSLEY'S NOVELS

Price 2s. in Picture Boards.

AUSTIN ELLIOT. Seventh Edition.

"A book which it is impossible not to like—and that not simply for its literary excellence, the construction of its plot, the beauty of its style; but still more for the earnestness of purpose, the genial spirit, and the manly tone by which it is characterised."—*Nonconformist.*

"This novel fulfils the first purpose of novels, it interests and amuses."—*Saturday Review.*

GEOFFRY HAMLYN. Ninth Edition.

"A more stirring, eventful novel can hardly be named than these Recollections. For prodigality of incident it is positively unrivalled, and, although the final consummation of all things may be easily divined, the interest of the plot is never for a moment permitted to flag. . . One feels that it was a master's hand which gave them life, and sent them forth to startle and delight the world. . . . One of the most agreeable novels which have come into our hands for many years past."—*Morning Post.*

THE HILLYARS AND THE BURTONS.

A STORY OF TWO FAMILIES. Ninth Edition.

"It is an uncommonly amusing and interesting book, because of the author's own nature, which is infused into every page, and because of the brilliants bits of writing about Australia and its colonists. These last flash out like gems from the rest of the narrative."—*Globe.*

RAVENSHOE. Twelfth Edition.

"There is an immense body of vitality in this book—humour, imagination, observation in the greatest wealth, and that delightful kind of satire which springs from a warm heart well reined in by a keen intellect."—*Spectator.*

LEIGHTON COURT. Ninth Edition.

"It is told skilfully, and is fresh, dashing, and interesting."—*British Quarterly.*

"One of the most agreeable things Mr. Kingsley has written."—*Saturday Review.*

SILCOTE OF SILCOTES. Sixth Edition.

"Every scene in the book is described with great freshness and realistic power. We will freely confess that the book is a delightful one to read, and that there is not a line of dull writing in it from beginning to end."—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

LONDON: CHAPMAN AND HALL.

W. H. SMITH & SON'S
REDUCED ORDNANCE MAPS,

Etc., etc., of the Principal Districts of England and Wales,
FOR TRAVELLERS AND TOURISTS.

"These splendid Maps, unquestionably the most perfect ever published, have been compiled from the Ordnance and Admiralty Surveys, with railways up to the latest date. Their particulars are most minute and accurate ; every possible information that a Map can give is afforded."—*Liverpool Albion.*

Price ONE SHILLING each, full coloured, cloth case. Scale, 4 Miles to an inch.

Aldershot and Environs, showing Surrey, Hampshire, etc.

Bedford and Environs, showing Huntingdon, Northampton, etc.

Birmingham and Environs, showing Wolverhampton, Coventry, Leamington.

Do. Plan of the Town.

Brighton & Sussex Coast showing Hastings, Chichester, etc.

Bristol and Environs, showing Bath, Bridgewater, Trowbridge, etc.

British Isles, Railway Map of.

Do. on linen, *2s.*

Do. on roller, varnished, *5s.*

Cambridge and Environs, showing Ely, Bury St. Edmunds, etc.

Carlisle and Environs, showing Silloth, Maryport, Cockermouth, etc.

Carmarthen and South-West Wales.

Cheshire, showing the Potteries, Manchester, Wigan, etc.

Cornwall, showing Land's End.

Derby and Environs, showing Buxton, Sheffield, Nottingham, etc.

Devon, North, showing Barnstaple, Bideford, etc.

Dorsetshire, showing the New Forest, Salisbury, Yeovil, etc.

Essex, County Map.

Exeter and Environs, showing Torquay, Plymouth, Dartmoor, etc.

Gloucester and Environs, showing Cheltenham, Malvern, etc.

Hereford and Environs, showing Ross, Malvern, The Wye, etc.

Hertford and Environs.

Ipswich and Environs, showing Harwich, Colchester, Newmarket, etc.

Isle of Wight.

Kent, showing Gravesend, Margate, Ramsgate, Dover, Folkestone, etc.

Lake District of Westmoreland and Cumberland.

Lancashire County and Environs.

Land's End & Cornwall.

Leicester and Environs, showing Lichfield, Loughborough, Stamford, etc.

Lincoln and Environs, showing Boston, Gainsborough, Grimsby, etc.

Liverpool, showing Southport, Wigan, Warrington, Crewe, Chester, etc.

Do. Plan of the City.

Leeds, showing Bradford, Wakefield, Halifax, York, Doncaster, etc.

London: W. H. SMITH & SON, 186 Strand, and at the Railway Bookstalls.

THE COMPLETE WORKS
OF
CHARLES DICKENS.

THE DIAMOND EDITION,

23 WORKS IN 16 HANDY VOLUMES.

PRICES.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
CLOTH, in Cloth Case - -	1	15	0	*PERSIAN CALF, in Leather Case*	3	13	6
ROAN, in Leather Case - -	3	3	0	*MOROCCO, in Leather Case* - -	4	4	0

Single Vols., in Cloth, 2s.

CONTENTS.

VOL. I.
THE PICKWICK PAPERS.

VOL. II.
MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT.

VOL. III.
DOMBEY AND SON.

VOL. IV.
NICHOLAS NICKLEBY.

VOL. V.
DAVID COPPERFIELD.

VOL. VI.
BLEAK HOUSE.

VOL. VII.
LITTLE DORRIT.

VOL. VIII.
OUR MUTUAL FRIEND.

VOL. IX.
BARNABY RUDGE.
HARD TIMES.

VOL. X.
SKETCHES BY "BOZ,"
TWELVE TALES, and
FIVE CHRISTMAS BOOKS.
A Christmas Carol
The Battle of Life, &c., &c.

VOL. XI.
OLIVER TWIST.
AMERICAN NOTES.
PICTURES FROM ITALY.

VOL. XII.
THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP,
And other Stories.
Master Humphrey's Clock, &c.

VOL. XIII.
TALE OF TWO CITIES.
GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

VOL. XIV.
UNCOMMERCIAL TRAVELLER.
EDWIN DROOD.

VOL. XV.
SKETCHES OF YOUNG GENTLEMEN, AND YOUNG COUPLES.
CHILD'S HISTORY of ENGLAND.

VOL. XVI.
EIGHT CHRISTMAS STORIES
From "Household Words."
SEVEN *from "All the Year Round,"*
AND FOUR READINGS, viz.:—
The Poor Traveller
Boots at the Holly-Tree Inn
Mrs. Gamp
The Story of Little Dombey
The Strange Gentleman: a Play.

LONDON: CHAPMAN & HALL (LIMITED), 193, PICCADILLY.
SOLD AT RAILWAY BOOKSTALLS.

SELECT LIBRARY OF FICTION.

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.

BY "SCRUTATOR."

Master of the Hounds | A Country Gentleman
The Squire of Beechwood

BY J. SHERIDAN LEFANU.

Uncle Silas | Willing to Die
Guy Deverell | Checkmate

BY CHARLES C. CLARKE.

Charlie Thornhill | Crumbs from a Sportsman's Table
The Flying Scud | Chips from an Old Block
Which is the Winner?

BY MISS MATILDA B. EDWARDS.

The White House by the Sea | Wild Flower of Ravensworth
John and I | Lisabee's Love Story

BY HAWLEY SMART.

BELLES AND RINGERS

Broken Bonds | Cecile; or, Modern Idolators
Two Kisses | Race for a Wife
False Cards | Play or Pay
Courtship | Sunshine and Snow
Bound to Win

BY F. W. ROBINSON.

Woman's Ransom | Slaves of the Ring
Under the Spell | One-and-Twenty
Milly's Hero

BY EDMUND YATES.

Forlorn Hope | Land at Last
Castaway

POPULAR AUTHORS IN THE

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.

BY ANNIE THOMAS.

Theo Leigh
Called to Account
A Passion in Tatters
He Cometh Not, She Said
No Alternative
A Narrow Escape
Blotted Out
A Laggard in Love
High Stakes

BY FRANCES E. TROLLOPE.

Aunt Margaret's Trouble
A Charming Fellow
Veronica

BY W. HARRISON AINSWORTH.

Lord Mayor of London
Cardinal Pole
Constable of the Tower
Chetwynd Calverley
Leaguer of Lathom
Spanish Match
Constable de Bourbon
Old Court
Myddleton Pomfret
Hilary St. Ives

BY SAMUEL LOVER.

He Would be a Gentleman
Irish Stories and Legends

BY MRS. ANNIE EDWARDES.

Archie Lovell
A Point of Honour

BY MRS. FORRESTER.

Olympus to Hades
Fair Women

BY KATHERINE KING.

Lost for Gold
Queen of the Regiment
Off the Roll
Our Detachment

BY ANNA C. STEELE.

Condoned
Gardenhurst
Broken Toys

SELECT LIBRARY OF FICTION.

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.

BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

The Whiteboy: an Irish Story
Mrs. S. C. Hall

Mary Seaham
Author of "Gambler's Wife"

Charles Auchester
Author of "My First Season"

Mr. and Mrs. Asheton
Author of "Woman's Devotion"

Hunchback of Notre-Dame
Victor Hugo

Elsie Venner
O. W. Holmes

Queen of the Seas
Captain Armstrong

Ned Locksley
A. Chermside

Carry's Confession
Author of "Mattie"

Captain Jack
J. A. Maitland

Christie's Faith
Author of "Mattie"

Never Forgotten
Percy Fitzgerald

Lizzie Lorton
Mrs. Linton

Bar Sinister
C. A. Collins

Secret Dispatch
James Grant

Sense and Sensibility
Miss Austen

Charley Nugent
Author of "St. Aubyns of St. Aubyn"

Hagarene
Author of "Guy Livingstone"

Lost Bride
Lady Chatterton

First in the Field
Author of "Recommended to Mercy"

Off the Line
Lady Charles Thynne

Queen of Herself
Alice King

Carr of Carrlyon
Hamilton Aïdé

Gold Elsie
F. Marlitt

Forgotten by the World (2/6)
K. Macquoid

Clara Levesque
William Gilbert

La Beata
T. A. Trollope

Paul Ferroll
Author of "Why Paul Ferroll Killed His Wife"

Wild Hyacinth
C. Emily Blanch Randolph

Three Chances
Author of "The Fair Carew"

Wizard of Mountain (2/6)
William Gilbert

All for Greed
Baroness B. De Bury

Dr. Austin's Guests
William Gilbert

My Heart's in the Highlands
Miss Grant

Kelverdale
Earl of Desart

Sabina
Lady Wood

Dark and Light Stories
Mark Hope

Gwendoline's Harvest
James Payn

High Stakes
Annie Thomas

Pique
Author of "Agatha Beaufort"

Chips from an Old Block
C. Clarke

Blithedale Romance
Nathaniel Hawthorne

Duke's Children (2/6)
Anthony Trollope

Belles and Ringers
Hawley Smart

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
3 0112 056513150

Just Published, in 18

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF
CHARLES DICKENS.

THE DIAMOND EDITION,

TWENTY-THREE WORKS. IN SIXTEEN HANDY VOLUMES.

PRICES:—

	£	s.	d.
CLOTH, in Cloth Case - - - - -	1	15	0
ROAN, in Leather Case - - - - -	3	3	0
PERSIAN CALF, in Leather Case - -	3	13	6
MOROCCO, in Leather Case - - -	4	4	0

Single Vols., in cloth, 2s.

WHYTE MELVILLE'S WORKS.

CHEAP EDITION.

Crown 8vo, fancy boards, 2s. each; or, 2s. 6d. in cloth.

ROSINE.
KATERFELTO.
SATANELLA.
SARCHEDON.
'BONES AND I.'
CERISE.
CONTRABAND.
TILBURY NOGO.
'M. OR N.'
UNCLE JOHN.
SISTER LOUISE.
THE WHITE ROSE.
THE TRUE CROSS.
SONGS AND VERSES.
MARKET HARBOROUGH.
BROOKES OF BRIDLEMERE.
RIDING RECOLLECTIONS.

'80.] LONDON: CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.